

2018

The Write Path, Second Edition

Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH

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Second Edition

The Write Path

First Year Composition and Rhetoric at Xavier
Produced by the Xavier Writing Program



VAN-GRINER

The Write Path

First Year Composition and Rhetoric at Xavier
Produced by the Xavier Writing Program
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A special thanks goes to Alex Hertzfeld for the use of his photo, "Gateway to Xavier," as the cover photo on the front of this year's edition of *The Write Path*.

Welcome!

As first year writers at Xavier, you may have questions or concerns about writing in your college courses. You may love to write and be excited about the new forms of composing you will learn in college or in your major, or you may feel intimidated and uncertain about what to expect. This book is designed to give you more information about writing in college and offer some examples of what successful college-level writing looks like, straight from Xavier students themselves.

In the first section of this book, you will find information about terms, ideas, and practices that will help you succeed with college-level writing and orient you to policies and resources for writing here at Xavier. As you read, you may find that you have heard some of this information before, though other parts may be entirely new. Phrases such as *rough draft*, *peer response*, and *rhetorical appeals* are likely to play a big part in your writing process in college, so being familiar with the meanings of these phrases can help you find your way in your writing courses. Additionally, this text will cover issues of academic honesty, plagiarism, and how to properly cite sources in research-based writing so that you can create quality work that acknowledges information you have learned from outside sources. Resources such as the Writing Center and Library will also be explained so that you know where to turn when you need additional support and information for your writing.

In the second section, you can read selected essays from first year students at Xavier who, like you, were recently in ENGL 101 or ENGL 115 working on similar assignments. Looking through their work, you can see what type of writing is expected so that you can better understand the genres you will be asked to write in your first year writing courses. You may have seen some of these before—such as a research-based argument—but you will be prompted to examine the writing more deeply with questions at the end of each essay, so that you can more fully appreciate the “how” and “what” of research writing. Other genres—such as the rhetorical analysis or narrative argument—may be less familiar, and seeing examples can give you an idea of what to expect from these assignments. These examples are not meant to be copied, nor do they represent a rigid set of expectations for an assignment, but rather offer a model of one way that this type of writing can be successfully crafted.

As you write papers in your ENGL 101 or 115 courses, be on the lookout for papers you wrote particularly well and consider submitting them for consideration for the D’Artagnan Award and next year’s *Write Path* publication. By submitting your work, you can support and encourage students who, like you, will be first year college writers next year. What you learn now can benefit your fellow students in the future, so please pass along your wisdom and work.

Everyone arrives at college with different backgrounds, experiences, and types of education. This book has been created to help put you on the “write path” in your first year as a Xavier student and to answer questions you may have about writing in college. Also, if there is anything that would have benefited you that was not included in this book, please let me know so that we can consider including it next year.

Good luck in your first year writing classes!

Sincerely,

Dr. Renea Frey

Writing Program Director

Introduction to The Write Path

College Writing—What Makes It Different?

Nearly everyone does some sort of writing in high school, but what kind and how much work you do may vary greatly from place to place. In your first year of college, one of the educational goals is to give all students a solid, common foundation in particular subjects, including writing, which can help you for the rest of the time you are at Xavier.

A common genre that students often learn in high school is the five-paragraph essay. While many of the conventions for this type of writing may transfer to college writing, you will also be expected to move beyond the five-paragraph essay to write increasingly complex, longer assignments. In many cases, you will be building upon writing skills you have already learned in high school and expanding them to fulfill new, more in-depth writing prompts.

For instance, you will still need to make strong, focused thesis statements that give the reader an overview of the claims you will be making in your work, and then organize the rest of your paper around supporting that claim with evidence. In most cases, you will also include elements like topic sentences that announce the content of a paragraph and transitions that allow the reader to easily follow your thought process. You should have a strong conclusion that gives the reader a “call to action” or explains the larger implications of your work, or clarifies why thinking about this issue or text in this way matters. While many of these conventions may be similar to what you have done in high school, it is likely that your instructors in college will ask for greater detail, more depth, additional outside sources, and longer length papers than you typically worked on in high school.

Some other differences in college writing include the following:

- The type of evidence that “counts” in some assignments may include peer-reviewed scholarly sources, which are written by and for academics in specific disciplines. These pieces may be longer than popular articles, include more field-specific jargon, and be challenging to interpret for those who are new to a discipline.
- You will likely need to offer multiple perspectives in your work, including counter-arguments to your position or refutations of competing perspectives. It is not enough to only argue *your* side—you need to view, and fairly represent, issues from multiple positions.
- In some cases, you may be asked to write from a formal third-person perspective, but in other cases, such as narratives or auto-ethnographies, you may have to write in first-person, beginning your thoughts with “I.”
- You will likely write for different audiences, some of which may be a community of scholars, whereas other times, you may be writing for the public.

- Different disciplines have different conventions, citation systems (e.g., MLA, Chicago, or APA), and expectations. As you write for different courses from across the university, you will find that writing varies between disciplines and that what counts as “good writing” may vary in each class.
- How you conduct research, integrate quotes, and cite sources in your work may be more rigorous than what was expected in high school. As you enter college-level work, you become a part of a community of scholars who have high standards for academic integrity and attribution for work and ideas. (More on this topic later)

Even if you found writing in high school easy, the writing (and thinking) you will do in college will expand your previous skills. In addition, you will be writing for new audiences, about novel topics, and be asked to engage in assignments that will likely push beyond the work you did in high school. This learning can be both challenging and exciting, and the work you do in your first year writing courses serves as a foundation for the writing you will create during your entire time at Xavier.

Process Writing

How many of us have waited to start a writing assignment until the night before, and then frantically written all night, quickly proofread the paper once or twice, and then turned it in at the last minute? While this may succeed in “getting the work done,” few people (despite the claims every instructor hears) actually produce their best work under these circumstances.

A common practice in ENGL 101 and 115 courses will be to engage in process-based writing. In this approach, instead of writing assignments where you write on your own, turn in your writing, and then receive a grade, you will work on your writing gradually, in stages, with feedback from peers and/or your instructor at multiple points along the way. In many of your other courses, you will still be asked to create writing where the final *product* is what counts, but in your first year writing courses, we will also focus on the *process*.

Some of you may already be familiar with peer review—sharing your work with classmates to receive feedback and suggestions for revision—but in first year writing, this may be more directed and involve particular practices, such as reading out loud, filling out a worksheet based upon the writing you read, or writing a reflection about what you changed in response to your peer’s suggestions. In addition, you may receive feedback from your instructor at various points in your composing process, or be asked to submit a proposal, outline, or research plan for your projects. By focusing on the process, your instructor can guide you as you draft, review, revise, redraft, and revise your papers again.

A process-based approach to writing may include all or some of the following steps:

- Invention work, including brainstorming, heuristics, listing, free-writing, or other exercises to start you thinking about a topic
- Proposals or research plans that ask for details about what, how, and when you intend to create a project

- Annotated bibliographies, which require you to document, summarize, and analyze the sources you are exploring for your research
- Exploratory Essays (sometimes called Synthesis Essays) may be assigned, which will ask you to discuss all of the sources you have examined for your research and reflect upon how what you have learned informs your thinking about your topic
- Outlines or zero drafts where you begin the initial stages of your paper but have not yet composed a full copy
- Rough or first drafts that include all of your completed ideas but that are not yet in the “polished” stage of drafting
- Final or polished drafts that represent your best work, which has been revised, edited, and proofread after receiving input from peers, your instructor, and/or the Writing Center
- Reflections on your writing process, revisions, or finished work

Throughout this process, your instructor may choose various places to intervene, read your current work, and offer feedback or direction. Your peers, too, may be a part of this process, in both formal peer reviews and informal discussions in class. Unlike many of your other courses, your instructor may give you points along the way for different stages of drafting—your finished paper may not be the only writing that “counts” toward your grade.

For many reasons, it is important to keep up with this process as it is outlined in your class schedule. First, it may affect the grade you receive on the overall assignment, especially if various drafts have point values assigned to them. Second, in a course that utilizes peer review, it is important that everyone have a draft to share so that participation is fair and possible. Third, by receiving feedback along the way, you can be more confident that you are fulfilling the assignment correctly and change course sooner if you find that you are not. Lastly, composing your work in steps, even if it is unfamiliar to you, will give you new, valuable skills that you can use in other courses.

Though many students can get into the habit of writing their entire paper quickly the night before, to succeed in college-level writing, it is imperative to take more time planning, drafting, and revising your work. Even the very best writers who are accustomed to receiving A's for their work can benefit from feedback and revision. Additionally, as you progress in your college education, you will encounter assignments that simply cannot be completed in one or two sittings. In order to produce your best work, as well as reduce needless stress, it is important to get into the habit of working on writing assignments in stages, over time.

When we “re-vise” we are actually “re-visioning” or re-seeing our work with fresh eyes. If writing assignments are put off until the last minute, there simply is no time to do this, nor is there space to receive feedback, visit the Writing Center, or read work out loud in order to catch errors in wording.

For these reasons, your first year writing courses will engage writing as process in some manner. This may be a new approach, or it may simply expand your past experiences. Either way, learning to see writing as an ongoing process will save you time, stress, and disappointment in the long run, and support your work in other courses. ENGL 101 and 115 encourage a foundation for best practices in writing that will serve you throughout your college career and beyond.

Rhetoric and Rhetorical Theory

You have likely heard the word “rhetoric” many times in your life, often in a derogatory manner that implies “merely words” or words without honesty or substance. Rhetoric, which will be addressed in both ENGL 101 and 115, is actually the art of speaking and writing effectively that dates back at least as far as ancient Athens in the Western tradition. Aristotle described rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion” and this definition, or similar ones offered by Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine, and others, points to the study of rhetoric as the analysis and use of words to persuade an audience.

The ability to persuade effectively has implications for the use of that power, so some rhetoricians also address the idea of *ethics* within or alongside rhetoric. In the Jesuit educational system, there is a tradition called *eloquentia perfecta*, which is speaking (or writing) well for the greater good. As you study, analyze, and effectively use rhetoric, keep in mind that rhetoric, like many tools, can be utilized in both ethical and unethical ways. As you build knowledge and become more aware of rhetoric in the world around you, recall the practices of *reflection* and *discernment* that are also part of the Jesuit tradition—when you make choices about using your rhetorical skills, remember that rhetoric can serve the greater good, or merely be self-serving.

Though we may not be aware of it, we use and encounter rhetoric all the time in our daily lives. You might engage rhetorical means when you try to persuade your roommate to pick up her dirty socks, or convince your parents to support a trip abroad, or write a cover letter to apply for a new job or internship. In each of these situations, you use persuasion to try to convince an audience of your perspective. Conversely, you also encounter rhetoric everyday in magazine or online ads, opinion pieces in the school newspaper, or political speeches on television or the Internet. Even memes, by using stock images and brief lines of text, provide short arguments that make a claim and try to convince the viewer of a particular perspective.

Because we use and encounter rhetoric so often in our everyday lives, it is important to understand how it operates in order to use it effectively and ethically. It is also crucial to recognize how rhetoric works on *you* in your daily encounters with texts, people, and ideas. With knowledge of how rhetorical appeals work, you will be able to engage the world around you with greater discernment, which will allow you to make more informed choices about the arguments you regularly witness.

Rhetorical Terms and Appeals

In ENGL 101 and 115 you will likely learn about *rhetorical appeals*, or the specific ways that people are generally persuaded. There are three main appeals:

- *Ethos*: The character or authority of the speaker/writer, which includes the reasons you might trust what a particular person says, either because of her virtues or knowledge. Audiences are not persuaded by speakers they do not trust.
- *Logos*: This is the logic or reason behind an argument that appeals to our rationality. An argument has to make sense and be backed with evidence in order for it to be accepted by an audience.
- *Pathos*: The emotions we feel when faced with a situation can also affect our choices and beliefs. We may be moved by compassion or fear to take a certain action for a social cause, or may feel joy and fulfillment when we are convinced to spend the weekend on vacation with friends.

Ideally, all of these appeals will work together in well-constructed, logical arguments that speak to our values and are presented to us by ethical, knowledgeable people. As you can imagine, though, this is not always the case, which is why it is so important to discern and identify rhetorical appeals in our everyday lives.

Other terms you may hear in your studies of rhetoric include:

- *Audience*: All rhetorical acts engage a rhetor and an audience to whom the rhetor speaks or writes. You already tailor your messages depending upon your audience, whether you are aware of it or not. When writing rhetorically, you will make more conscious choices about wording, style, or method of delivery in order to reach your audience most effectively.
- *Purpose*: All communication has a distinct and specific purpose. Do you want your audience to take a particular action? Or believe a new idea? Knowing what you want to accomplish with your writing will help you craft more effective texts.
- *Kairos*: This refers to the timing of a rhetorical text—what is relevant today may no longer make sense three months from now. A rhetorically effective text will take into account the timing of events and will arise at the proper moment.
- *Exigence*: Rhetorical texts respond to stimuli or events and may pose a potential solution to a problem. The exigence is a state that demands attention and the rhetorical text is what arises in response to it.
- *The Five Canons of Rhetoric*
 1. *Invention*: Pre-writing work such as brainstorming, heuristics, listing, etc, that allows you to “discover” your argument
 2. *Arrangement*: Putting together your argument in a logical, effective way that your audience can easily follow
 3. *Style*: May include the wording, tone, or appearance appropriate for your text, audience, and purpose

4. *Memory*: In classical rhetoric, this refers to memorizing a speech, but today it can indicate referencing citations, digital memory, or public/cultural memory that influences rhetorical texts
5. *Delivery*: For classic oratory, this might include gestures or tone of voice, but in written texts may refer to the way writing is presented on a page, digital delivery, or forms such as video or podcasts

Knowing these terms and understanding their application will give you a vocabulary to analyze, think, and write about the way rhetoric works. In ENGL 101 and 115 you will likely conduct a *rhetorical analysis* at some point, which will ask you to examine a text and analyze its rhetorical components. You may also be asked to consciously utilize rhetorical appeals in your own writing as a means of creating more effective arguments. These may be new genres of writing, and examples of effective rhetorical analyses and rhetorically grounded arguments will be offered later in this book.

Though you may not have realized it, you are already surrounded by rhetoric and confront rhetorical appeals everyday. By understanding how rhetoric operates, you will be able to identify the persuasive tactics you encounter in order to make more informed choices *and* to interrogate your own use of rhetoric to ensure that your rhetorical skills are used in a way that serves your values.

Research, Citation, and Academic Honesty

In college, you will be asked to write research papers in many of your classes. In ENGL 101 and 115, you will learn about the conventions of research and citation as part of your course work. Again, some of this may be review, but many students find that college-level research writing entails more careful documentation than their high school writing required.

Research can be viewed as an ongoing conversation between multiple parties within and across disciplines. As new ideas are discovered, academics write up their findings and publish them in scholarly journals, where they are reviewed by their peers. When you read scholarly articles, you are “listening” to those conversations, and when you write research papers you are “joining” that conversation by synthesizing information and applying it to your own interests.

One way that you can start to understand and analyze this scholarly conversation more thoroughly is through creating an Annotated Bibliography as part of your research work. Although what is expected for this assignment will vary depending upon the course, discipline, parameters of the upcoming paper you may write, concepts covered in class, or the preferences of your professor, all annotated bibliographies serve the purpose of both *summarizing* and *analyzing* the specific sources you are exploring in your research process. In addition to demonstrating to your professor that you are actively engaging with research on your topic, creating an annotated bibliography also allows you to contemplate sources more deeply, analyze their position or content, and consider how each source contributes to the work you are doing yourself. This thinking and writing process can be very beneficial to you as you conduct research, allowing you to pause and think critically about each source that you examine prior to using it in a research paper or other assignment.

For an Annotated Bibliography like this, you would list each source alphabetically by author in proper citation format (MLA 8th edition for English classes, but check with your professor if you are unsure or if you are working on an assignment in a different discipline), and then provide the annotation—a summary and analysis of the source—underneath the entry. If you receive an Annotated Bibliography as an assignment, be sure to check with your professor about what he or she expects to see in each entry and how it should be formatted, as this can vary greatly depending upon the course. Remember, too, that you can take this assignment to the Writing Center for additional feedback or help with citation methods.

Because scholarly writing depends so much on the ongoing research “conversation,” the academic community has very high standards for crediting and citing research that others have conducted. While standards for citing and incorporating sources into your own work may vary in high school, once you are in college, there are particular rules that you must follow in order to keep your writing and research practices ethical.

In college, you will likely be asked to integrate outside research with your own ideas. When you do this, you may make claims or express ideas that are yours, and then back them up with evidence that comes from outside sources. This is a more complicated process than, say, writing a research report that summarizes the ideas of someone else, or an opinion paper that simply expresses your own position. In college writing, you will often be asked to integrate both of these practices into a more complex written argument.

When you utilize research conducted by others, it is important to always attribute those ideas to their sources. There are a variety of ways that you might incorporate outside sources into your work, including:

- *Quotes*: A short passage that is written out word for word exactly as the original author stated it
- *Paraphrase*: A segment of someone else’s work that you have put into your own words
- *Summary*: Condensing the overall idea of a work into a much shorter format in your own words

To maintain academic honesty you must cite the sources you use in all three of these cases.

Citing a source typically includes in-text citations inside of parentheses at the end of the sentence where the outside source is quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. For MLA format, which you will use in most of your English classes, this will include the author’s last name and the page number of the article or book where you found the information. Your papers should always include a Works Cited page, where you list all of the sources you used for your paper, arranged alphabetically by the author’s last name; this should also include important publishing information, which will be covered in your class or found in an MLA 8th edition style guide.

Please note that as of March 2016 MLA has moved to 8th edition style guidelines, so the information in your textbook may not be updated if you are using an edition published prior to that time. You may need to consult an online database such as Purdue Owl, or purchase an MLA update supplement for your textbook.

Your ENGL 101 or 115 instructor will go over proper citation formats in class for different types of documents, but the first and most important step is to remember that you *must cite these sources*, even if you do not quote them directly. Although you may lose points for formatting a citation incorrectly or need to revise if you've made a mistake, citing outside work in the first place will allow you to avoid charges of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, which are much more serious.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism can be defined as using someone else's words or ideas without properly identifying the source. Plagiarism can carry dire consequences for students who engage in it, including failing grades for the assignment or course, and in some cases, suspension.¹ Here are some basic types of plagiarism that can compromise a student's academic integrity:

- *Intentional Misrepresentation*: This occurs when a student deliberately attempts to present another's work as his or her own. This can include copying or paraphrasing someone else's writing without attributing the source, buying a paper online, or having someone else write the paper.
- *Self-Plagiarism*: This type of misrepresentation happens when a student "recycles" a paper written previously for another class or context. In some cases, you may want to continue research that you have conducted for another class or project, but *you may not use any writing that you have already turned in* for a grade. If you decide to further previous research, it is best to check with your instructor and be totally honest about what you are doing so that your motives and writing process are completely transparent.
- *Unintentional Misrepresentation*: When a student is not familiar with community citation standards, or that these standards may be different from what you did in high school, it is possible to plagiarize due to uncertainty or lack of knowledge. When in doubt, cite your sources.
- *Patchwriting*: Rebecca Moore Howard (1993) defines "patchwriting" as "*copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym-substitutes.*" This type of plagiarism is not always the result of dishonesty; sometimes it occurs because students are not familiar with the ideas or language they are attempting to incorporate. Nevertheless, it is still considered plagiarism *even if the sources are cited*.

¹ For more information about the penalties for academic dishonesty, see: <http://www.xavier.edu/library/xu-tutor/Xaviers-Policy-on-Academic-Honesty.cfm>

- *Excessive Quotation:* Even if you cite your sources, you cannot cobble together a paper based mostly upon the words or ideas of others. When you use long quotes, do so sparingly and only when the author has stated an idea in such a way that it warrants the in-depth use of another's specific words. (Also check MLA citation guidelines, as long quotes require block formatting that is different from short quotes.) Be wary, however, about using multiple sets of long quotes as this may border on plagiarism, even if you cite the sources. When you write papers in college, the bulk of the words and ideas should be your own.

In some cases, you may not need to cite a source. For instance, when referring to your own personal experiences or thoughts, original research you have conducted yourself, or when you use common knowledge or widely accepted facts, a source is not necessary. What constitutes "common knowledge" may vary widely, but is generally considered to be a fact that is easily accessible and consistent across many sources (e.g. the Declaration of Independence was ratified in 1776). However, if you are not sure if your information is considered common knowledge, *cite the source*.

Integrating sources correctly into your own work will also help you to avoid plagiarism, as doing so allows you to clearly show in your writing which ideas are your own and which ideas come from others. Although you may understand how a source supports or more fully clarifies your own work, it is important to explicitly explain that to your audience. Framing outside information will make your work more effective and also help you avoid accidental plagiarism:

- *Introduce* the integrated work with a short sentence or phrase that contextualizes the information for your reader.
- *Quote, Paraphrase, or Summarize* the work, including proper in-text documentation per citation style and then including all sources used in your Works Cited page.
- *Comment* on the work and how it relates to the argument or information you are presenting. This will help your reader understand how you interpret the work you are citing and its relationship to your own ideas.

Learning to effectively and ethically integrate research into your own writing is a key component of what you will learn in ENGL 101 and 115—skills that will also support your success in other classes throughout your time as a student. While other disciplines may use different citation styles (such as APA or Chicago) all disciplines value honest, ethical research practices and eschew anything that could be construed as plagiarism or misappropriation of another's work. For these reasons, it is very important that you learn and understand the research and citation methods expected of you in college, as the consequences for not following these community standards can be dire, with long-term effects on your academic career.

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty

Your instructor will have a clearly stated plagiarism policy in your ENGL 101 or 115 syllabus and you should understand thoroughly the possible ramifications for not properly attributing your sources. Plagiarism often occurs when a student is pressed for time or overwhelmed by an assignment; sometimes, an otherwise honest student may make unfortunate choices in high pressure situations that lead to more work, trouble, and upset than taking the time to do the work honestly. If you find yourself in a situation where you are stuck or afraid that you cannot complete the work on time, talk to your instructor, or take your assignment prompt to the Writing Center for help or clarification. Even requesting an extension or having points docked for turning in a paper late are much less severe than a charge of plagiarism.

Students can mistakenly believe that their instructors will not know if they have plagiarized or copied a paper—in full or in part—from another source, but this is rarely the case. Software such as Turnitin catches many cases of plagiarism and instructors generally know the writing styles of their students. With Internet technology, it is very easy for instructors to search for key terms in their students' work to see if a paper has been plagiarized or recycled from another source. Even under situations of stress, it is never a good idea to turn in work that is not fully your own—an honestly but poorly written draft can be corrected and recovered from, whereas an academic dishonesty charge will follow you throughout your college career.

Xavier's Academic Honesty Policy states the following:

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation.

All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own.

Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an "F" in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all such incidents, though the teacher has full authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test, or course. If disputes of interpretation arise, the student, faculty member, and chair should attempt to resolve the difficulty. If this is unsatisfactory, the dean will rule in the matter. As a final appeal, the academic vice president will call a committee of tenured faculty for the purpose of making a final determination.

Please note that not only are there immediate consequences for academic dishonesty (including a zero for the assignment, an “F” for the course, or expulsion from the University), but also that this action will be reported to the Dean’s office of the college in which you are enrolled, and that a record of this action will be recorded. While the ramifications for *any* instance of academic dishonesty are definitely not worth the risk, in the case of a second or repeated offense, the consequences are typically much more severe.

In all cases, academic honesty and integrity are always the “write path” to take. Citing your sources clearly and integrating them effectively into your own work will make you a better writer *and* help ensure your acceptance into a community of scholars.

Resources for Students

Xavier University McDonald Memorial Library

We often think of the library as a place to go to find books, but the library actually offers many more services that will be of use to you as you research various projects. In addition to the books housed in the library, you can also use OhioLINK or Inter-Library Loan (ILL) to check out any book available in libraries across the state or country. This gives you access to many more books than could be contained in a single building on campus. Keep in mind, though, that these services may take a few days to process your request and get the book to Xavier for you to pick up, so always start your research process early.

In addition to traditional print books, the library offers services to connect Xavier students to a variety of journals, media, and other resources. By using Search @ XU, you can easily access thousands of resources. In ENGL 101 or 115, your class may take a trip to the library, or a librarian may come to your class to talk with you about how to search the databases and find the information you need. You can also drop by the library, connect via chat text, or email the librarians to ask questions or to seek help if you are having trouble finding information.

The library has a makerspace on the first floor, right as you come in the main entrance from the Academic Mall. The makerspace is open to all students to explore, design, create, build, and collaborate using technologies such as 3D printing and 3D scanning, robotics, circuitry, programming, a laser etcher and CNC mill, tools, crafts, and more.

In addition to the library services, you can also use the Conaton Learning Commons (connected to the library building) as a place to study or meet with classmates to work on group projects. There are 14 group study rooms in the CLC with capacities that range from two or three people, up to 10 people. Many of these rooms are equipped with white boards or plasma screen projectors with web access, so you can easily share your work and collaborate in these spaces. There are also two small computing labs with access to photocopiers, printers, scanners, and computer workstations. Other student support services in the Conaton Learning Commons include the Learning Assistance Center,

Math Lab, Writing Center, Language Resource Center, Academic Advising, and Digital Media Lab. All of these services are here for you to use and can help support your writing and research in a variety of courses.

James A. Glenn Writing Center

The Writing Center is another important resource for students at Xavier to help them develop writing skills and to support them with writing assignments in various classes. Located in the CLC 400 (overlooking the circulation desk), the Writing Center offers peer tutoring help with writing during any part of the drafting process. While this is a great place to come if you want someone else to look over your paper once you have a rough draft, the Writing Center tutors can also help you understand an assignment more fully before you start drafting, work with brainstorming ideas, give assistance organizing a paper, offer direction if you are halfway through an essay and get stuck, or provide information about documenting sources. At any stage of the drafting process, the Writing Center is an invaluable asset for students working on writing.

If you use the Writing Center, it is best to make an appointment in advance by calling (513-745-2875), since there may or may not be a tutor available if you just walk in. While most students go to the Writing Center in person, sessions can also be conducted via Skype or email at writingcenter@xavier.edu.

When you go, be prepared with your assignment prompt and name of the class and professor, as well as any notes, texts that your writing refers to, and drafts or outlines you have already done. Think about areas where you need the most help with the assignment and have questions ready to ask the tutor, as this will allow you to make the best use of your time. It is optimal to plan to go to the Writing Center a few days before an assignment is due so that you have time to make revisions, or even do additional research, before turning in work for your class. Sessions last about fifty minutes and the Writing Center is open a variety of hours (including Sundays) so that it is possible to find time in your schedule to make an appointment.

Some students mistakenly believe that the Writing Center is only used by people who struggle with writing or who are “bad” writers. The truth is, no matter how skilled a writer you are, receiving feedback on what you have written can improve the overall quality of the work you turn in. Everyone benefits from having reviews of their writing and almost all writing can be developed more fully. The Writing Center is a key support service for success in ENGL 101 and 115, as well as other courses and projects that require writing. Be sure to utilize this resource while you are at Xavier.

Some Words About Success

In your first year at Xavier, you will be building the skills you need to succeed in your classes, as well as your life beyond the university. The writing you will practice in your ENGL 101 and 115 courses is a part of that skillset, but it does not exist in isolation. Part of success in writing—or college, or life in general—is planning your time wisely so that you are able to meet all of your commitments

without being overwhelmed or stressed in the process. It may be a change for you to have to plan so many activities, assignments, and classes yourself, but learning to do so effectively will ensure that you are able to be successful in your courses.

Learning to write well takes practice, which is why we promote a process-based approach to writing. You may find writing more challenging in college than you did in high school, but as with learning any new skill, you will find that you develop efficacy the more you practice. Be sure to give yourself enough time to work on your writing assignments, even in courses where the process itself is not emphasized as much as it is in ENGL 101 or 115. Brainstorm, jot down outlines, take good notes on your research, write rough drafts, and visit the Writing Center. All of these practices will not only increase the likelihood of achieving higher grades on your papers, but also develop the skills you need to write well in all areas of your life.

Remember though, as with any skill, writing capability is acquired over time and with repeated practice. While feedback from peers, your professor, or a peer tutor can aid in developing your skills as a writer, these practices do not automatically guarantee that you will get the highest grade possible on an assignment. All students build competency over time, and peers, professors, and tutors can only address a few issues at once. Be patient with the process and engage all of the resources available to you at Xavier to ensure that you reach the highest level of writing success you can during your time in college.

Student Work

How to Use This Text

In the upcoming pages, you will find examples of student work from first year students who, just like you, took ENGL 101 and/or 115. These examples can be used in a variety of ways and are here to support the writing that you will do in your first year at Xavier.

One way that these student essays can help you is to illustrate what the different genres of writing you may encounter in ENGL 101 and 115 look like. It can be hard to craft a particular kind of writing, such as a rhetorical analysis or ethnography, if you have no idea what these genres are or should include. By looking at an example paper, you can see what typically goes into writing this type of paper, as well as observe how this can be done particularly well.

These papers do not serve as a rigid template for you to copy. Rather, you should use these texts as models for what to expect in a particular genre of writing, what you should include, what “works” about a piece of writing, and then consider how you can adapt or include those skills in your own work. By “stepping back” from a text and asking questions about how it is composed, you can analyze not only the content, but also the rhetorical and compositional strategies that are employed in creating that piece of writing.

To guide you through reading these examples, each paper will be foregrounded by a reflection from the students themselves, discussing their writing process for that paper. You can see through their words what challenges, obstacles, strategies, and steps they took to get to the finished piece of writing that is published in this book. As readers, we often only get to see the product of a writer’s efforts, but in this text, you will also gain insight about the process that led to these essays. By reading these reflections by students, you might find that you relate to some of their struggles, or learn an important tip that could help you with your own writing.

After the reflection you will find the essay itself, followed by a short series of questions. These questions ask you to look more deeply at the writing itself, to ascertain what you think the writer was doing or intending at different points along the way. How does this writer transition from one idea to the next? What kinds of sources does this writer use as support for her argument? How are quotes integrated into this argument? These are the kinds of questions that may be presented after the essay itself, for you to consider and/or for your instructor to use in class to prompt discussion about the writing process.

By examining the writing of other students who were working under similar conditions, you can seek guidance and encouragement for your own work in first year composition and rhetoric courses at Xavier. Additionally, by analyzing the writing process in this way, you can learn more about the way that you write. How do *you* transition between ideas? Support your claims? Or integrate quotes? By getting into the habit of analyzing writing itself, rather than only its

content, you gain *meta-cognitive awareness* of your own writing process. By understanding how writing happens, you can acquire insight about what you do, how you do it, and why.

This knowledge can allow you to make more conscious choices and utilize the Jesuit principles of *reflection* and *discernment*. Through reflection on your writing, you can learn more about yourself as a writer and communicator, and then make more discerning choices about those practices. As you develop your skills as a writer in your first year courses, you will build the foundation of your future academic success, as well as establish tools with which to participate in your communities, careers, and civic lives. This text is designed to assist you in those endeavors and to serve as a guide for your first year as a college writer.

The D'Artagnan Award

The essays that you find in this book all come from entries for the D'Artagnan Award, an annual award co-sponsored by Xavier's Writing Program, the Dean's office, and the Writing Center. Each year, students are encouraged to submit their best work from ENGL 101 and 115 for this award. The submitted essays can be written in any genre and the top three winners, along with a selection of other exemplary student work, will be published in *The Write Path: First Year Composition and Rhetoric at Xavier* for the following year.

The name for this award was chosen specifically because D'Artagnan, like our first year writers, had to work hard to improve his skills, overcome obstacles, and rise to the challenge of new situations that require maturity and development. First year students who win this award become leaders for future students, as their work will become a tool to guide new first year writers on their educational journey.

As you use this text this year and develop your writing skills in ENGL 101 and 115, please consider submitting your favorite pieces for next year's D'Artagnan Award. You can learn more about this award and submit work anytime throughout the year at <http://www.xavier.edu/english-department/The-DArtagnan-Award.cfm>.

D'Artagnan Award Winners

Category: Research-Based Argument

This year's top winners for the D'Artagnan Award all happen to fall into the category of research-based argument. While in future years these three award-winning essays may be comprised of different genres, for this year the First Place winner, First Runner-Up, and a tie for Second Runner-Up are all research-based arguments of one kind or another.

Our First Place essay, entitled "The Medical Practicalities of an HPV Vaccine Mandate" by Anjali Nelson, takes on a public health issue, arguing that everyone should be vaccinated against HPV before sixth grade. Anjali uses her background as a pre-med student to examine the controversies around mandatory vaccination for HPV in children from multiple perspectives and surveying a variety of sources, including medical journals, legal advocates, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and many others. Her research allows Anjali to make a well-rounded argument that takes multiple sides into account while still maintaining commitment to a belief in mandated HPV vaccines for everyone. One reviewer noted that this essay has "a clear thesis; claims are supported with evidence; it's well-organized, readable on the sentence level, and it engages thoughtfully with counterarguments," all qualities important for any fully developed, effectively constructed research argument.

Gina Deaton, our First Runner-Up winner, also draws upon her personal experience working with kids as a starting place for her essay, entitled "Opening Doors for Children." Gina's argument is a *causal* argument, which means that she focuses on the causes of the issue rather than proposing a solution. In this case, Gina seeks to find the *causes* of differences she sees between her own childhood and that of children from younger generations, namely how today's children do not seem to spend very much time outdoors. Beginning with questions about the causes of this situation, Gina draws conclusions from research about the effects of technology, parental attitudes, and changes in the structure of a child's day to make claims about why children no longer spend as much time outdoors as they once did. Reviewers noted that Gina's paper was well organized with clear evidence to back up her claims, which make her argument for why these factors exist much clearer, easier to read, and convincing to her readers.

This year we had a tie for the Second Runner-Up position between Sara Haas and Angela Provenzano. Sara's essay, "Mountaintop Removal: A Practice Better Left Buried in the Dirt," offers compelling evidence against the practice of mountaintop removal in Appalachia, claiming that it hurts both the economy and the environment in this region. Sara uses both research and personal experiences in her essay, including images that help strengthen her argument. Angela writes about the unfairness of House Bill 2, which forces people in the state of North Carolina to use restrooms according to biological sex rather than gender identity, in her essay "The Freedom of S(PEE)ch: An Argument Against House Bill 2." By examining a wide variety of sources and perspectives on

HB2, Angela argues that those supporting the bill do so on illogically grounded beliefs and that the bill actually does the opposite of its stated purpose of making bathrooms safer. In both Sara's and Angela's essays, they address current issues faced by marginalized populations in America, offering strong arguments for their readers to think more deeply about these controversies and to take action based upon solid reasoning and care for those affected.

Although you may find that your classes require you to write different types of research-based arguments, or that your prompts are very different from the ones for which these essays were written, there are elements you will see in these research-based arguments that will help you with your assignments. When reading the essays, notice how the writer sets up his or her argument. Is it engaging to the reader? What kinds of evidence do these writers use? How are sources integrated? Think, too, about how papers begin and end. What draws a reader into a paper? How do papers conclude in a way that is memorable and effective? Each of these four papers offers in-depth arguments that rely upon multiple outside sources. Notice how the arguments are arranged. What claims come first, second, and third? Is the order effective? Why might the author have chosen to set up the argument in this manner?

In all of these cases, students have produced exemplary work in their first year writing courses and learned skills for research writing and argumentation that will serve them in other courses. Although each discipline has its own set of rules and expectations for writing, many of these skills—such as integrating sources, making claims, using evidence to support one's position, etc.—will be necessary in a variety of contexts. Your first year writing courses will help you develop these skills more fully so that you are able to utilize them effectively throughout your time at Xavier.

In the following student selections, you will read reflections from Anjali, Gina, Sara, and Angela before reading their work. This will give you insight about the different processes that produced these pieces and offer advice from these writers that may help you in your own writing process. At the end of each essay, you will find questions to consider about the particular piece you have just completed reading. These prompts will guide you to explore the writing and rhetorical strategies used by these student writers so that you might gain deeper understanding of what makes this work effective.

The editorial team hopes that you enjoy reading these essays as much as we did and that you, too, are able to develop your writing, argument, and research skills in your first year at Xavier.

The Medical Practicalities of an HPV Vaccine Mandate

Anjali Nelson

First Place Winner | Research-Based Argument

Reflection

As a student on a pre-med track, I wanted the topic of my essay to relate to a controversy in health. I delved into the topic of the HPV vaccine mandates, as it is relevant in the medical world today and as I'm passionate about vaccination. This persuasive essay was a compilation of research and analysis from two previous essays I wrote on the same topic. For this reason, a good portion of my writing in this paper came from those papers. Choosing a topic that actually interested me was important for this paper and helped me avoid burnout. The more excited a student is about a topic, the better the paper will be.

While writing the paper, I did not feel confident in its organization, as the issue is broad and the essay has so many components. Also, another thing that I noticed in my rhetoric class is that I struggle with typos and grammar errors. Revising these essays several times and having different people read the essays are vital for me. For this reason, I had my professor read parts of the essay during office hours, went to the Writing Center, and asked friends to read it. I was able to spot these errors readily and felt more confident on the arrangement of my paper. Xavier is filled with great opportunities to improve your papers like the Writing Center and professors' office hours. I encourage students to take advantage of these tools at Xavier.

The Medical Practicalities of an HPV Vaccine Mandate

For many pediatricians, struggles with parents of sixth-grade girls surrounding HPV vaccine requirements are all too familiar. Many parents ponder why their young daughter needs to be vaccinated against a sexually transmitted disease and oppose any government mandates of the treatments. However, this vaccine is a medical advancement whose implementation will improve public sexual health. According to medical professionals, a mandate requiring young girls to receive the vaccine prior to entering sixth grade benefits many adolescents. In fact, some doctors argue that requiring sixth-grade boys to be vaccinated against HPV can be advantageous, as well. However, these physicians clash with value-driven parents who worry about the safety, and especially about the sexual implications, of the vaccine. Despite the concerns of parents, a mandate for both sixth-grade boys and girls in public schools should be implemented. Rather than failing to require the vaccine and solely advocating for abstinence, the government and educators should require the HPV vaccine before entering public schools. A state-wide mandate of the vaccine for both males and females before sixth grade benefits the sexual health of the public.

Human papilloma virus, or HPV, is the most common sexually transmitted infection. The most common forms of HPV are spread through intimate contact. According to the Centers for Disease Control, approximately 79 million Americans have some type of HPV. Many strains of HPV leave within two years, and the majority infected will never develop major health issues. However, certain infections can be lasting, leading to genital warts and several forms of cancer in both males and females. Due to the latent behavior of the virus, many people unknowingly spread HPV through intercourse. In some cases, a pregnant mother can spread the virus to the fetus, causing an infant born with genital warts in his or her throat ("HPV Vaccine Information For Young Women").

The University of Queensland created the HPV vaccine, and the FDA approved the HPV vaccine in 2006. There are three forms of the vaccine: Cervarix®, Gardasil®, and Gardasil® 9.

According to the CDC, HPV vaccines have proven in clinical trials to guard against genital warts and events before cervical cancer. Reportedly, the vaccine has reduced the amount of HPV infections in adolescents by approximately 64%. The CDC has recommended the HPV vaccine for children between the ages of 11 and 12 and that it can be administered as early as the age of nine. For children under 15, two doses are recommended, while adolescents need three doses. Physicians believe that children should receive the vaccine before puberty when they might be exposed to HPV. The CDC professes that the United States currently has the most effective and safe administration of the vaccine throughout time ("Questions and Answers").

Due to the effectiveness of the vaccine, several bills have been introduced that seek to make the HPV vaccine mandatory for public school. In Virginia, Rhode Island, and Washington D.C., there are requirements of vaccination before entering middle school. Many of these policies are aimed towards girls, since these vaccines are focused on preventing cervical cancer. Due to parental complaints, several bills in other states have not gained ground. Even in the states in which the mandate is enforced, several exemptions are allowed, based on health, religious, and philosophical reasons ("HPV Vaccination: State Legislation and Statutes").

In this essay, I will give evidence about the effectiveness and necessity of the vaccine. I will discuss medical professionals' opinions, discussing their reasons for the mandates. Looking at arguments from law-educated personnel, I will assert that such a mandate is legal. I will present evidence that this vaccine is also useful for young men, against the spread of the STI and in the prevention of throat cancer. Later, I will address opposition to the vaccine, by presenting studies and statistics in response. In detail, I will refute claims that the vaccine is incredibly dangerous and that uptake leads to increased sexual activity. In the conclusion of this argument, I will restate my beliefs as to why the vaccination

should be mandated for both adolescent girls and boys. I will also connect this controversy to the Xavier community, which values progress in public health and the safety of the entire community.

According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), the HPV vaccine successfully prevents several strains of HPV when given to children before they engage in sexual activity. This is the main reason for the seemingly early administration of the vaccine. The vast majority of children have not engaged in intercourse prior to sixth grade. It is important that these children receive protection prior to any chance of being exposed to the virus. When Gardasil and Cervarix were still being approved, trials revealed that the treatments were 100% effective in preventing the infection of the cervical region from HPV 16 and 18. In men, the vaccine successfully prevents anal cells from changing due to genital warts and HPV infection. The vaccine also effectively protects women against oropharyngeal infections. Research even found that merely receiving one dose benefitted adolescents ("Human Papillomavirus Vaccines"). The effectiveness of the vaccine is reason enough to wholeheartedly support this vaccine. These treatments are advancing public health, protecting against the most common STI in the United States. Such an effective vaccine should be mandated for adolescents, who will reap the benefits of these treatments throughout their entire life.

Schoolchildren are the real stakeholders in this debate about vaccination for HPV, and a mandate will assist them in the future when they might be exposed to HPV. The requirement of this vaccine is a social benefit. This mandate is more important than the "high school students who could be exposed to HPV by having sex with unimmunized classmates; this is about preventing cancer throughout every child's lifetime." It seems strange to require a medical treatment for one's child, but this mandate is necessary because it is a public good, affecting more than just one child (McCarthy). This issue benefits all children, while many parents opposing this measure look solely at unfounded health concerns. For many in the medical community, the big picture in the controversy about vaccination involves the number of people that are immunized due to these requirements. Parents and lawmakers concerned about particular children disregard the immense benefits of this vaccine. This mandate centers on reducing the prevalence of HPV in the entire population, instead of harming children or encouraging them to engage in premature sex.

Many mandates focus on young girls receiving the vaccine, but adolescent boys should also be required to be vaccinated against HPV. On average, over 50% of men will contract HPV in their lifetime. HPV can be equally detrimental to men as to women, causing penile, anal, and throat cancer (Chen 291). In fact, oral HPV is three times more common in men than in woman ("HPV and Oropharyngeal Cancer"). There is also the added issue of the spread of HPV. The majority of HPV infections are spread by men to women or other men (Chen 291). Since men and women both suffer the consequences of such a common STI, it is logical that girls and boys receive the vaccination prior to

entering the sixth grade. This extension of the mandate can also relieve a lot of parental stress over the sexual implications of the vaccine. Unfortunately, there is still a stigma surrounding women engaging in sexual activity, as society has the tendency to prize a woman's innocence and purity. The fact that the mandate normally targets young girls exacerbates parents' fears about the sexual activity of their daughters. If officials extend the mandate to boys, parents might grow to accept the vaccine, as it does not target their daughters specifically. Lawmakers should mandate the vaccine for both boys and girls in order to eliminate parental uneasiness about their daughters and improve the public health of all children.

In a study published in *Pediatrics*, researchers discovered specific reasons why parents refrained from vaccinating their children from HPV. NIS-Teen, from 2008 to 2010, randomly phoned parents of adolescents and asked about plans for vaccination and reasons for not vaccinating (Darden 646). The survey found that, over time, parents were more likely to vaccinate their children from HPV. In fact, the proportion of adolescents not vaccinated from HPV decreased from 83.8% in 2008 to 75.2% in 2010 (648). However, as clearly shown, the majority of parents do not intend to vaccinate their children from HPV, and the reasoning is quite consistent. Parents frequently cited "not necessary/needed" and "not sexually active" as reasons for not vaccinating against HPV (645). Many parents of young daughters might either be afraid of their daughters engaging in sex or in denial that the possibility exists. Additionally, from 2008 to 2010, there was a 4.5% increase in the number of parents crediting health concerns as main reasons for not vaccinating (649). In spite of many doctors recommending the HPV vaccine, large proportions of parents still opt to not vaccinate their children from HPV (650). Parents, who care deeply for their children, might be swayed by loud voices in the anti-vaccination and abstinence-only crowds. Even against their physicians' advice, many parents will unnecessarily worry about and vehemently oppose the vaccine mandate. Seeing these results, physicians worry about the health implications of parents opting out of vaccination.

Some proponents of alternative medicine and critics of vaccines argue that the vaccination is not as effective and can, in fact, be harmful. Joseph Mercola, an alternative healthcare provider, questions the effectiveness of the Gardasil treatments. Some proponents of alternative medicine report many deaths following the HPV vaccination and other health issues like neurodegenerative disorders and disabilities (Mercola). What's often used by voices in the anti-HPV vaccination community is anecdotal evidence. Chastity educator Shawna Sparrow wishes to "personalize those numbers" by describing the death of two young women. For example, she discusses Gabrielle Swank who became ill after her treatments and was diagnosed with inflammation of her central nervous system. After her death, her neurologist presumed that the Gardasil treatments led to these events. Additionally, Sparrow reports that a college student died three weeks after receiving the Gardasil treatments, with cause of death unknown (39). Parents, who understandably worry about the health of their children, listen to these tragic, yet isolated incidences and dismiss the HPV vaccine's benefits.

While these conditions are extremely tragic, these claims fail to acknowledge the ubiquity of the vaccine. Seventy-nine million doses of Gardasil were distributed between June 2006 and March 2016 (“Frequently Asked Questions About HPV Vaccine Safety”). This proportion of serious, negative events linked to Gardasil is less than 0.05%. Without dismissing the experiences of affected persons, there is undeniable evidence that it is extremely unlikely that a child receiving Gardasil will suffer adverse effects. What’s equally frustrating in a medical conversation is the use of anecdotes over scientific, research-based evidence. Anecdotal evidence should not hold weight in this situation. There is no conclusive evidence that the Gardasil treatments caused these girls’ deaths. Even though Swank’s neurologist believes that the treatments are to blame, one doctor’s claim does not provide the support needed to prove the danger of the treatments. Arguments based on medical research and the opinions of several physicians and scientists are essential in the debate over the safety of the vaccine.

Some parents and religious figures believe that they have the right to make the sole medical decisions for their children. They are troubled that the government is not giving parents enough choice and time to have discussions with their daughters about the dangers of STIs like HPV. To them, the vaccination should not be mandated, because they believe that the government should not be able to make decisions when it comes to medical issues for their children (“Statement on HPV Vaccine”). Parents should make decisions about their children’s medical health. However, vaccines involve more than one’s own child. Vaccines improve the health of the entire community. This is why the federal government supports the legality of these mandates. The requirement is no different than that of the past. In 1905 the Supreme Court declared, in *Jacobsen v. Massachusetts*, that the state possesses “police powers” to monitor immunization for the public good (Cox and Stewart 318). However, many parents and religious leaders protest that the HPV vaccine should not be mandated because this disease is spread by sexual relations. In 2000, the court, citing the previous case, upheld a Hepatitis B vaccine mandate, an infection spread by sexual means, even though parents argued against it (327). Virginia and D.C. have a broad opt-out program for parents with religious and medical reasons which correlates solely to the sexual nature of the transmittance of HPV (323). Even though parents might have differences of beliefs about sexual activity, the precedence of Supreme Court decisions support these mandates, while opt-outs defend parental rights.

Abstinence proponents and religious figures argue that administration of the Gardasil vaccination to 11-year-old girls causes them to lose their innocence. Many, including Sparrow, believe that “schools are so sure that young girls are going to grow up to have sex with multiple partners that they are giving all of them a potentially lethal vaccine” (39). For example, Sparrow believes that when a young girl receives the Gardasil treatments, she expects to engage in intercourse at a young age. She believes that abstinence is the main way

to prevent the spread of HPV. I agree with Sparrow that children in the sixth grade lack the maturity to engage in sex. However, there is evidence that these predictions are off-base. Reports examined the uptake of the vaccine and sexual activity of adolescents. According to a report by the Centers for Disease Control, there was no modification of sexual behaviors after being vaccinated from HPV (Bednarczyk 801). Evidently, children do not see HPV vaccination as a justifier for early intercourse. According to research, adolescents will not engage in sexual behavior at a higher rate after vaccination. Sparrow's worries, as well as potential parental concerns, are quelled by this study.

Advocacy for abstinence is also undermined by the percentage of young people breaking their chastity vows. According to a study performed by Janet Rosenbaum, 82% of people who took a purity pledge disavowed their commitments. In fact, these people were more likely to engage in riskier sexual behavior. For example, they were 10% less likely to use a condom and 6% less likely to use contraception. The study mentioned that abstinence programs were likely to minimize the importance of condoms, vaccination from STIs, and contraception, in favor of merely promoting chastity. Abstinence education misinforms students, teaching them that contraception and these vaccinations are not at all effective, a problematic mindset for teenagers who are likely to engage in sex. These programs teach adolescents that premarital sex is shameful and leads to consequences, i.e., STIs and pregnancy. It is illogical to believe that by teaching abstinence, adolescents will not have sex before marriage. By not administering the HPV vaccine to youth and only teaching them abstinence, educators and parents jeopardize the children's futures.

Instead of allowing anti-vaccine and pro-chastity proponents to warn children about the Gardasil treatments and premarital sex and solely advocating for abstinence, the government should mandate the HPV vaccine for boys and girls. First and foremost, this vaccine does wonders in the medical world. This vaccine is important in the discussion about STIs and sex education. Scaring parents using anecdotal evidence and a small proportion of adverse effects from the vaccine is not conducive to this conversation. If society wishes that there will be improvements in sexual health, people must accept that both boys and girls will engage in sex and that vaccinations for HPV are beneficial. We must overcome the mental roadblock about girls and boys engaging in sex that scares us into making detrimental decisions for our children. To improve health and fight against ignorance, we must support comprehensive sex education programs that stress the importance of these vaccines. If a community values health and equality between the sexes, it must spread as much information as possible about the necessity of the vaccines and combat any faulty opposition.

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Questions to Consider

1. In her reflection, Anjali says that she struggled with the organization of this paper because there were so many ideas and sources to organize. If you outlined her paper, how would it look? What strategies did she use to effectively arrange the information in this paper? What reasons might she have had for choosing the organizational strategy that she did? Are there other ways that you could imagine effectively organizing this paper?
2. Anjali uses a variety of sources in her paper, drawing largely from medical resources. She notes in her paper that one of the main reasons parents resist the HPV vaccine is because of their beliefs about abstinence and that the vaccine will promote promiscuous behavior. How does Anjali address these concerns or counterarguments? Do you think that parents are included in her intended audience? Why or why not? How might her argument and/or sources change if she addressed a different audience? What is the relationship between audience, sources, and the evidence offered?
3. Anjali is a pre-med student who specifically chose this topic because of her interest in public health. How does her background influence her ethos as the writer of this essay? Even if you did not know this about Anjali, are there places in the text where her knowledge of medicine, science, and public health are apparent? Do you think that this essay would be as convincing if it had been written by someone with a different background? How might interest, previous knowledge, and a broad understanding of the issue at hand contribute to the ethos of the writer?

Opening Doors for Children

Gina Deaton

First Runner-Up Winner | Research-Based Argument

Reflection

I was inspired to write on this topic because of what I had noticed in the kids that I've nannied and babysat. Their childhood seemed scarcely different from mine, except for one huge factor: they hardly spent time playing outside anymore. As that was such a large part of my childhood and my development, I decided to research it.

Two things were challenging for me with this paper. First, personally, I often struggle to maintain my voice in a paper, as it will get drowned out by quotes and data that I have uncovered. The second challenge, however, was unique to this type of essay (causal): it was challenging for me to avoid proposing solutions in this paper; it was supposed to strictly be about the causes of a problem.

After deciding on my topic, I spent a good chunk of time researching. I looked for reasons that might explain the problem at hand (children today spending less time outside) and I consulted multiple sources to ensure that they were legit. I chose the ones that seemed the most prevalent, and I compiled the best (most supportive/most reliable) sources on them. Then, I mapped it out on notebook paper, and I sat down and typed, putting the pieces together. I always took my essay to my professor to ask for her opinion and revisions once I had produced my first draft, and I always did a peer review as well. Taking into account what my teacher and my peers said (a lot about those two challenges I mentioned above, as well as making my piece flow better instead of reading like a list), I revised and completed my final draft.

My biggest piece of advice to first year writing students is to use your resources! That includes your professor, your peers, the writing center, and possibly more. You should never turn in a paper without it being reviewed by at least two of these sources, in my opinion. It really helps to have someone else look at your piece, and you should know that everyone wants to help you and wants you to succeed!

Opening Doors for Children

"We don't want to go outside," they whine. I look at the five-year-old and eight-year-old that I nanny, exasperated, while they stare blankly at the television, eyes glued on the Power Puff girls. Their iPad charges beneath it. They've shot down every one of my ideas for the beautiful afternoon, and I'm left sitting on the couch watching reluctantly with them. I think back to when I was their age, how my parents would become frustrated, calling me multiple times before I would come inside for dinner. I loved playing outside, and it was an enigma to me that these kids tired of it so quickly. What had changed, in just the 10 years

between us? Why aren't these kids, along with others I have babysat, jumping at the chance to run around or explore? Although every family's rules differ and children's schooling varies, children no longer play outside like they need to in order to develop healthily. This is due to the overwhelming presence of technology, overprotective and paranoid parents, the cutting of recess time in schools, and overly-structured days.

The modern, rapid increase in technology is largely responsible for the differences between the childhood of today's generation, and past generations. According to a study done by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2010 and reported on the website, *Huffington Post*, "elementary aged children use on average 7.5 hours per day of entertainment technology, 75% of these children have TVs in their bedrooms, and 50% of North American homes have the TV on all day" (Rowan). Whether or not families realize it, the screen time that their children are receiving may be unhealthy. While these statistics are not true of every child, it is clear that this overwhelming presence of technology may be affecting many children in a detrimental manner because it is one of the distractions keeping them from playing outside, exploring, or learning on their own time. The *Huffington Post* article continues, "Young children require two to three hours per day of active rough and tumble play to achieve adequate sensory stimulation to their vestibular, proprioceptive and tactile systems" (Rowan). For the sake of their learning and development, children need to have multiple hours spent disconnected, and the technology present in their homes may be hindering them from developing healthily. This is frightening because this lack of development in adolescence will carry throughout the child's entire life. *Huffington Post* concludes, "This sensory imbalance creates huge problems in overall neurological development, as the brain's anatomy, chemistry and pathways become permanently altered and impaired" (Rowan). It's clear that children need more time spent disconnected from technology in order to develop properly. Whether this be playing outside or inside, the health benefits are undeniable. As useful as some technological innovations can be, children need some time spent away. Today, the overwhelming presence of technology is hard to avoid, but it must be rationed off to children in small doses or sessions. Otherwise, their health will be hindered. However, even when technology is not the reason kids are staying in, there is a surprising factor that might be holding them back: their parents or neighbors.

While not every parent is overprotective of their children, some sources claim that many modern parents are too paranoid to let their kids play outside, unattended—thus, they spend less time playing outside altogether. Parents today may be more paranoid, but it's without reason. According to the *Washington Post*, the claim that more children are abducted today is a complete myth. In fact, "... all signs indicate that the problem [child abduction] has been improving. Many state missing-children agencies show declining numbers of cases.

That trend is supported by FBI statistics showing fewer missing persons of all ages—down 31% between 1997 and 2011. The numbers of homicides, sexual assaults and almost all other crimes against children have been dropping, too” (Finkelhor). Despite this, a mother in Houston was arrested three years ago due to “child endangerment” when she let her children ride scooters in the neighborhood cul-de-sac without adult supervision; the police accused her of abandoning them to go grocery shopping (“Cooper v. City of La Porte Police Department”). This mother probably thought nothing of letting her children play in the neighborhood street; they were just having fun, playing safely, and spending time outside. She might have played outside in her childhood, regularly unsupervised, without it being a big deal. However, leniency is different today as this story is one of many similar cases. If child predation rates are actually improving, the paranoia that has parents so worried—and has neighbors turning each other in—must be the illusion that the world is less safe for children today, so they cannot play unsupervised, therefore cutting back the time they spend outside altogether.

Additionally, if children are not given outside play time at home, it is an issue because they may not be getting much at school either. While not every school is suffering from recess cuts, the many that do are negatively impacting their young students. The Center for Public Education reported that 20% of all school districts have decreased their recess time. Of these 20%, “the schools that cut recess time reported reductions from 184 minutes per week pre-NCLB [No Child Left Behind] or 37 minutes per day, to 144 minutes per week, or 29 minutes per day” (Barth). While this may not seem like a lot, “averages can sometimes conceal extremes; some districts may have slashed recess altogether or to just a few minutes per day. In addition, this could signal the beginning of a downward trend that, if it continues, could put recess in danger for more children” (Barth). It is also important to remember that children need two to three hours of active play per day (Rowan), and school takes up most of their day; school needs to include playtime if teachers expect their students to actively participate and pay attention. A *Live Science* reporter interviewed a first-grade student, Nadav, whose recess time was cut significantly, and he talked about how hard it was for him to adjust. *Live Science* reported that Nadav had received several discipline warnings from his teacher, despite his previously spotless record. Nadav said, “In kindergarten, we had recess twice a day and we went to gym twice a week.” Now, as a first-grader, Nadav’s class only went to gym once every six days. They had one recess period a day, split with lunch, so that Nadav had only about 15 minutes a day to run around. He said, “I get this feeling in my legs when they want to run and that feeling moves up to my belly and when that feeling moves up to my head I can’t remember what the rules are” (Pappas). If teachers want their students—especially younger children—to be able to focus, work must be balanced more evenly with play.

Not only does the child reap health benefits, but he or she will also be able to behave and focus better. Finally, if elementary schools cannot provide sufficient recess or gym time for their students, they will deprive them of a very normal and healthy part of their lives, making them think that it is normal to have little playtime—which it is not. Children need sufficient time to play outside in order to succeed in the classroom, but more importantly to be able to live their lives as children. This includes having sufficient time to be bored, or to be able to decide what they want to do. With this “more work, less play” mentality that has been emphasized in schools, comes the more rigorously structured schedules that children follow daily, allowing them little time to bored.

Not every child follows a rigorously structured day with little free time, but those who lack a healthy dose of boredom are taking a hit to their creativity—an essential element to one’s childhood. Children who live very structured lives, running from school to piano lessons to soccer practice and more, are left with no time to be bored; therefore, no time to explore, play outside, or be creative. According to *Psychology Today*, “Simply amusing our children endlessly may actually do them more harm than good. They will never learn how to act autonomously, accept responsibility for their own well-being, seek out challenges that interest them, or learn how to self-motivate” (Ungar). Additionally, getting caught up in a routine leaves children unsure of what to do when they actually have free time. Instead, it becomes a rarity, rather than a necessity for their growth. A parenting website comments, “Unstructured time gives children the opportunity to explore their inner and outer worlds, which is the beginning of creativity. This is how they learn to engage with themselves and the world, to imagine and invent and create” (Markham). It is essential that children have time to play outside and learn what it means to explore. This is how they will discover what they love to do, what peaks their interest, and it is how they will develop a wide imagination. Granting children free time, whether they use it to play outside or explore another interest, is the first step necessary in their healthy development. In the case that they already have free time—maybe they are spending it elsewhere—they may just need a little push.

“After this episode, we are shutting off the TV and going to the park,” I instructed the kids. It was a beautiful day, and I wasn’t going to let them miss it. When I was their age, I remember inventing the idea of putting the lawn sprinkler on the trampoline on a hot day. If I had been overloaded with screen time, I wouldn’t have thought of that idea. I wasn’t sure of how their school granted recess, but if it did cut back time, they absolutely needed to be playing outside now, while they still could. I chose a nearby park that was safe, and I would be there to supervise. They whined, and said they were too tired—but by the time we arrived at the park and the monkey bars were in sight, they had forgotten all about it.

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Questions to Consider

1. Gina opens her paper with a quote from children in her care and a short narrative giving details about her experience caring for children and their reticence to go outside. She also offers questions about *why* it is that children have this resistance. How does this opening paragraph work to draw in the reader? What is the rhetorical purpose of the questions and the narrative? How might this affect the audience? What information does it give about the background and how might that work differently than a more "objective" introduction?

2. In her reflection, Gina mentions that she often feels challenged to maintain her “voice” when writing a paper and that it can be a struggle to not let her voice “get drowned out by quotes and data.” How does Gina construct her paper to keep her voice in it? How does she integrate or frame quotes so that she is clearly the one who is still speaking? What strategies does she use to let the reader know that she is the one speaking, rather than her sources?
3. Gina also discusses how she chose sources for her paper, seeking ones that were supportive and reliable. Looking at her Works Cited page, as well as how the sources were integrated into her paper, what kind of criteria might she have used to judge whether or not a source was “legit?” What other sources might she have used to back up her argument? Do you see any places where other or different information might have made her argument more effective? As a reader, is there additional information that you would have found convincing?

Mountaintop Removal: A Practice Better Left Buried in the Dirt

Sara Haas

Second Runner-Up Winner (Tie) | Research-Based Argument

Reflection

The time that I spent on my Alternative Breaks trip to Harlan, KY really impacted my paper choice. I knew immediately that the topic in which I wanted to devote my time was mountaintop removal. Witnessing the damaging impact that MTR has on Harlan locals, as well as the timeless landscape of Appalachia, will stay with me forever. I submitted this paper for publication because I wanted to spread the word on MTR.

The most challenging part of this assignment was narrowing down my resources. I immersed myself in the culture of Appalachia, and I saw the civilian's struggles firsthand. Therefore, it was very hard to prioritize the stories and hard-facts that I would present. Trust me, there is much more to MTR than what is found in my paper.

I began this paper by writing a paragraph for each of the resources that I decided to use. None of the paragraphs I initially wrote had structure, and they all were outlandishly written. Eventually, as I continued to write one misplaced paragraph after another, the entire paper began falling into place. I then wrote in transitional sentences, an introduction, a conclusion, and a title. However, that was not the end of my writing process. I continued to read my paper over and over again, day by day. I would cut out resources, catch mistakes, insert sentences, etc. Each day that I read the paper, I would find something else that I would want to change. I continued to do this until the day that I had to submit it.

So, from this, my advice to fellow writers is to first find a topic that interests you and that you can find many primary resources on. Second, you must begin the writing process as soon as possible, even if that means writing paragraphs without actually knowing where to place them in your paper. And finally, remember to edit and review your paper as much as possible.

Mountaintop Removal: A Practice Better Left Buried in the Dirt

Every night in their Appalachian Mountain home, the Davidson family found comfort in the harmonic sounds of nature and the late night summer breeze. However, in late August of 2004, the Davidsons experienced less scenic senses. The animals surrounding their home had since vanished due to the constant rumbling and racquet made from the machines above, and the sweet summer breeze carried the distinct smell of diesel. On August 30th, Dennis Davidson

awoke to the sound of breaking glass. Hurrying to the gaping wall of the nursery, he found his youngest son, Jeremy, seen in Figure 1, crushed in his crib by a thousand-pound boulder (Staff). The boulder had been dislodged through the process of mountaintop removal (MTR), which is a new method of coal extraction found in the Appalachian Mountains. Instead of removing the single layer of coal found within in the mountain, MTR blasts off the top of the mountain to reach the layer of coal beneath, and then pushes the rubble into the valleys below (Palmer et al.). Mountaintop removal is a horrific practice that should be banned due to the geological and environmental destruction of the mountains, the hazardous and toxic living conditions of local families, the drastic loss of employment for coal miners, its negative effect on Appalachia's already failing economy, and the fact that there are no advantages effective enough to outweigh the disadvantages.



Figure 1: Three-Year-Old Jeremy Davidson (Davidson)

Mountaintop removal is destroying the unique geological and environmental aspects of the Appalachian Mountains. According to Loucks and his colleagues at the World Wildlife Fund, the mixed mesophytic forest of Appalachia is an ancient natural habitat that hosts the most biologically diverse temperate region in the world, as well as the richest temperate freshwater ecosystem in the world. The flora consists of ageless oaks and medicinal herbs, and the fauna contains countless unique birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and crustaceans (Loucks et al.). Mountaintop removal devastates the landscape of the mountains by using massive machinery to move over 100 tons of earth in one scoop. These machines are so large that they compact the soil to the point where nothing can grow. Additionally, the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1977 does not require that the coal companies undergo restoration efforts, meaning that the mountains are permanently left in this condition (Frithsen). The result, shown in Figure 2, is that a once beautiful mountain range composed of valleys and peaks becomes a flat wasteland with no chance of returning to its once ageless glory.



Figure 2: MTR Site in Southern West Virginia (Stockman)

Additionally, the people of Appalachia are faced with negative health consequences and dangerous living conditions due to the presence of MTR. The loose rubble falling into the valleys below has caused the destruction of both homes and businesses, as well as horrendous deaths, like that of Jeremy Davidson. Another hazard includes flash floods, which come from the loss of vegetation capable of absorbing excess rainwater. For some communities, the streams and rivers that make up their only source of water have become lifeless and barren due to both toxic chemicals and blockage caused by fallen debris. Scott Simonton, a Marshall University professor of environmental science, discovered a manganese concentration of 4,063 ppb (the desired level is 50 ppb) and a hydrogen sulfide concentration of 21 ppm (the desired level is 0.71 ppm) in the drinking water of homes surrounding an MTR site (Holzman). Overall health defects are also substantially higher in communities plagued by MTR. Studies from the *Journal of Rural Health* and WVU discovered that MTR communities experience significantly higher levels of asthma, heart disease, lung cancer, and birth defects (Kentucky; Ward).

Not only is the health of both the people and the natural world in danger, but the employment of coal miners is at risk as well. In 2014, the number of underground miners in the entire United States was only 46,000, dropping by 6.8% from the previous year (Arena). Although the recent “clean energy” craze, like solar and wind energy, are responsible for the transition away from coal, it is not the only cause of this employment decline. MTR is taking jobs away from generational miners by the handful. Robert Byrd, the senator of West Virginia from 1959 to 2010, explains these observations when he states, “The increased use of mountaintop removal mining means that fewer miners are needed to meet company production goals” (Randolph). More and more hardworking Americans, who have sacrificed their health and well-being for their careers in the mines, are being thrown aside and left in poverty with little concern for their wellbeing. Overall, this decrease in employment has spiraled into a self-perpetuating loss of profit for the Appalachian community.

The spread of MTR has negatively impacted Appalachia's overall economy by playing a large part in the disappearance of companies and investments in the Appalachian area. These mountains, which house sights and sounds found no where else on earth, are used in some states as a steady source of revenue. Tourists will hike scenic trails, mountain bike, rock climb, etc., bringing in profits for the town. However, coal communities, who are most in need of increased financial opportunities due to the loss of numerous coal mining



Figure 3: Photo of Me Overlooking What Is Left of Black Mountain's View (Bowman)

jobs, are plagued by MTR. The coal mining town of Harlan Kentucky, the 21st poorest county in the U.S., houses Black Mountain, the tallest mountain in Kentucky. At its prime, it was Harlan's most popular tourist site, as well as one of their main sources of profit. However, when MTR began on the mountain next door, tourism dwindled. As shown in Figure 3, the beautiful view of the Appalachian mountain range seen on top of Black Mountain was replaced with a bare and lifeless plateau. Now, Harlan has become a dilapidated reflection of what it once was. As an activist and lifetime Harlan resident states, "As long as you have a polluted community, no other industry is going to locate there" (Staff). Any businesses brave enough to open were quickly shut down due to a lack of profit.

Although there are advocates for the positive effects of MTR, the advantages, like cheapness, effectiveness, and safety, have little evidence and simply do not outweigh the disadvantages. MTR is considered cheaper than traditional mining because there are less employees needed to maintain the site. However, not only do employment cuts decrease the financial stability of Appalachian families, but they also have little impact to the cost of MTR. In fact, in 2008, multiple coal mining states discovered that it was more expensive to maintain a MTR site than an underground mining site (Randolph). This increase in cost is primarily due to the extensive safety regulations put into place by the EPA, as well as as the cost and maintenance of the massive machines that they require. Another possible advantage is that MTR is believed to be faster, and therefore more efficient in terms of electric costs. Although it is true that MTR is faster than traditional underground mining, it does not produce a significant increase in efficiency. An EPA study estimated that the mining produced from MTR would have a less than 1% impact on our electric rates overall (Randolph).

Lastly, MTR is believed to be safer than underground mining, which is true in terms of the miners employed to the site. However, there are many more health concerns in MTR communities than traditional mining communities. This information leaves citizens at a loss as to why such a horrendous act is still in practice.

It seems that the enduring mountains of Appalachia have finally met their match. The rugged and rich terrain of Appalachia is at risk of disappearing, the richest water in North America has become tainted by toxic compounds, and the highly evolved and fragile ecosystems nestled in the beautiful landscape have slowly deteriorated. Not only that, but families, who have called these mountains their home for generations, are faced with hazardous, toxic, and unsustainable living conditions. Even towns, which were once hotbeds for countless American workers and small businesses, have been negatively affected by MTR. Furthermore, there is no significant gain of profits or an increase in energy efficiency to balance these detrimental consequences. The people of Appalachia are fighting against MTR for the safety of the land and the people they hold dear. However, their complaints and petitions have been futilely met with silence. In order to aid in their opposition against this movement, it is essential to spread awareness on the issue. With vast numbers of persistent protesters and enough time, mountaintop removal will be seen as it is: a mining practice that is better left buried in the dirt.

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Questions to Consider

1. Sara is clear in her reflection that “there is much more to MTR than what is found in my paper,” which means she had to narrow down the scope of her topic, choose her resources wisely, and focus on what mattered to her in order to create this argument. Can you see other directions that Sara might have gone with this essay? If some other element of the rhetorical situation were to change—the audience or the medium perhaps—how might she have altered her rhetorical strategies in order to address that new situation? For instance, what would be different if she addressed this to second grade students? Or as a letter to the editor in an Appalachian newspaper? Or recast it as a five-minute video? Or a tri-fold brochure? In those cases (or others) how might the scope and focus of her argument change?
2. In her reflection, Sara talks about how process-oriented writing this paper was for her. She mentions writing a paragraph for each source, but then reorienting these paragraphs, adding structure, transitions, a thesis, etc. When you read her paper, can you see evidence of this original strategy? Would you think that the paragraphs had been written before the thesis? Why or why not? After creating her original structure, she read and reread her paper, making changes repeatedly throughout the process. How do you think that this affected the finished product of her paper? What might be different about his paper if she had begun it the night before?
3. In Sara’s paper, in addition to research, facts, and statistics, she uses stories of real people affected by mountaintop removal as well as pictures. What is the rhetorical purpose of these strategies? How does this add to the rest of her argument? Would this paper be more effective or less effective without those elements? As a reader, what was your reaction to the stories and images?

The Freedom of S(PEE)ch: An Argument Against House Bill 2

Angela Provenzano

Second Runner-Up Winner (Tie) | Research-Based Argument

Reflection

My best advice for an argumentative paper is that, if possible, choose a topic based on something you may not know much about, but you're really interested to delve into. I chose the topic of House Bill 2 (Public Facilities Privacy and Security Act) after changing my mind many times. I didn't know much about the issue of gender and bathrooms so I had a pretty uninformed, neutral stance going in. This really helped me see both sides of the argument openly because I wasn't too attached to my bias. If anything, I leaned toward the Conservative, "common sense" argument supporting bathroom bills. However, after initial research, I ended up switching my stance and going against these bills. From this I would say, do not be too attached to your bias coming in and be opened to changing your mind—you might surprise yourself. After realizing the "bathroom bills" was a too big topic to tackle, I made my topic even more compelling by choosing a current and controversial case.

The most challenging part of the paper was finding sources supporting both sides of the argument. A lot of my sources went against House Bill 2, and it was hard to find many "reliable" sources supporting this. In order to navigate through this, I looked toward news sources such as online magazines, videos, and newspapers, which were clearly biased, but showed the thought process of those who supported the bill. I managed to deduce the opposition of the bill to three major arguments and showed why these arguments are invalid. I also emphasized that the bill only had support from a very concentrated community of people.

Writing a major research paper is a long process. I first started by doing background research and looking to the primary source of the bill itself. Then I turned to secondary sources, both in the academic field and pop culture. I even made an annotated bibliography with my sources beforehand, which really helped me organize them and connect them. While writing my essay, I always made sure after I included a source, I directly connected it back to my thesis statement using my own words. I utilized peer review many times, which really helped me add analysis that was missing and "weed out" points that didn't directly support my thesis. I also read over my essay out loud to catch grammar mistakes.

Although a "research paper" doesn't always sound like the most exciting thing in the world, you can make it more interesting by choosing a topic you genuinely want to learn about. This will make you more willing to put the time into that you need to. Don't lose your voice or writing style in the paper either. I made sure to throw a pun in the title and use strong questions throughout the paper to show a little of my sass. Good luck, writers!

The Freedom of S(PEE)ch: An Argument Against House Bill 2

Bathrooms—they are not only a meeting space for middle school girls and a break from that never-ending class, but also an unnoticed safe space of daily life. However, imagine being forced to use the bathroom of your opposite gender—it suddenly transforms into a living hell, a dreaded place with fear and anxiety etched into the stalls. This is what it may be like for a transgender person who is forced to use the bathroom of their biological sex, rather than their gender identity, as prescribed by the Public Facilities Privacy and Security Act, also known as House Bill 2 (HB2). HB2, a bill passed by North Carolina in March of 2016, kidnaps the freedom of speech and expression of transgender people by forcibly defining them by their biological sex rather than their gender identity in terms of bathroom use. Those who passed the bill call it a “common sense” measure for the safety of women and children against predators. However, this statistically invalid statement is made at the large cost of the human rights of the transgender community and at a cost that has inevitably indebted North Carolina as a state that wrongfully restricts the freedom of expression. By forcing people to use the bathroom of their biological sex rather than their gender identity, House Bill 2 discriminates against the transgender community and strips away their freedom of speech.

On March 23, 2016, North Carolina’s General Assembly passed “The Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act,” also called “House Bill 2,” a controversial bill that limits a person to use only the bathroom of their biological gender. The bill’s full name is “An Act to Provide for Single-Sex Multiple Occupancy Bathroom and Changing Facilities in Schools and Public Agencies and to Create Statewide Consistency in Regulation of Employment and Public Accommodations.” It was created in response to the city of Charlotte, NC’s Non-Discrimination Ordinance passed on February 22, 2016, that explicitly protected the LGBT community from discrimination in employment, contracting, and public service. It also allowed transgender people to use the bathroom of their gender identity (“Non-Discrimination Ordinance”). The general assembly of North Carolina passed HB2 in one day during a special session. HB2 was written and passed with a conservative bias since the majority of North Carolina’s House and Senate as well as its governor, Pat McCrory, are Republican. The intended audience of the bill was North Carolina lawmakers and citizens. However, the bill received nationwide attention, as many regarded it as discriminatory toward the LGBT community.

The bathroom issue is only discussed in Part I of HB2, but it is the focus of this argument. Part I of the bill states that people can only use single-sex multiple occupancy bathrooms that align with their biological gender. The bill defines “biological sex” as “the physical condition of being male or female, which is stated on a person’s birth certificate” (House Bill 2). It even used “biological sex” 13 times throughout the paper in order to emphasize that a person’s biological sex overrides their self-proclaimed gender identity (House Bill 2). Here, biological sex is clearly focused on genitals, and it forbids transgender people from using the bathroom of their gender identity unless they get gender

reassignment surgery. However, some transgender people may not be able to afford this or may not wish to undergo it. The only offered accommodation is using single-user, gender-neutral bathrooms, which are not always available. The bill allows the cry for public “safety” to override the personal freedom of self-identification. Also, HB2 sets no specific consequence for breaking this law. It seems to be a general threat to the LGBT community rather than a legally and consistently enforceable law.

The bill has five other parts that discuss the issues of employment discrimination and the court system. The U.S. Justice Department wrote a letter to Governor McCrory on May 4, 2016, explaining that the employment policies in HB2 clearly discriminate against the transgender community under the Civil Rights Act of 1864 (Morrill). After issues arose, McCrory attempted to reform the bill with Executive Order 93 on April 12 (McCrory). On his website, McCrory published a video the same day titled “Executive Order No. 93 to Protect Privacy and Equality,” which outlines the content of the order as a compromise to those who have been outwardly opposing HB2. With the order, McCrory gave up ground on issues of explicit discrimination in HB2 against the LGBT community (protection in employment), but did not lose grip on the issue of bathrooms. Although he allowed private companies to make their own rules for bathroom use, he regulated public bathroom use to biological sex of the person. McCrory noted that HB2 was received with “misinformation, misinterpretation, confusion ... and selective outrage and hypocrisy” (McCrory). With this statement, McCrory blames the negative reception of the bill on the interpreters of it, rather than the content itself. However, the fact that he actively reversed almost all of House Bill 2 conveys that the content of the bill discriminated against the rights of the LGBT community and had a clear anti-LGBT bias. In standing by the use of public bathrooms based on biological sex, McCrory emphasizes that he still does not think regulating transgender bathroom use violates civil rights.

There are many perspectives to consider when analyzing the effects of HB2. It is beneficial to first understand the consequences of those it affects directly—the LGBT community. Many negative psychological consequences are likely to arise when forcing a transgender person to use the bathroom of their biological gender, including embarrassment and anxiety due to an increased possibility of harassment. Dr. Catherine Lee, a medical director of Bradley School at Brown University, argues that HB2 does more harm than protection because “LGBT youth are at a much higher risk for experiences with violence including bullying and physical assault due to negative attitudes towards the LGBT group” (Lee 8). This relates to a study done by Jody Herman of UCLA on 93 transgender participants. She found that “68% have experienced some sort of verbal harassment and 9% have experienced some form of physical assault” when using public bathrooms separated by biological sex (Herman 66). Although HB2 was implemented for the “safety” of the public, it has clearly done the exact opposite by significantly alienating and risking the safety the transgender community. They are constantly in danger of physical and verbal abuse, which naturally heightens their anxiety toward using a restroom. Gavin Grimm, a transgender male from Virginia who was banned from using the bathroom of his gender identity

in school, published an article in the *Washington Post* where he discussed the anxiety that comes with having to use the bathroom. Grimm wrote, "I feel the humiliation every time I need to use the restroom and try to 'hold it' in hopes of avoiding the long walk to the nurse's office" (Grimm). This reflects the negative psychological consequences of HB2, as transgender people are singled out and treated as different. HB2 is not a matter of public protection, but rather encouragement of discrimination and harm toward the transgender community.

After analyzing the effects on the transgender community, it is important to analyze the issues of House Bill 2 from an enforcement legal standpoint. Rain Dove, an androgynous female who is an arising fashion model for both genders, published a video on Facebook conveying that HB2 can only be enforced arbitrarily. In the video, Dove exemplifies this by dressing in both male and female clothing and going around telling people she is a female, but people do not believe her because she has a natural masculine appearance. She says this makes her feel uncomfortable, unsafe, and questionable being forced to use either a female or male bathroom, so she makes a plastic toddler toilet her outhouse. With her masculine appearance, Dove's video emphasizes it is difficult to assume her "biological sex" or if she is transgender based on outward appearance (Dove). In other words, who decides if she looks transgender or not? This makes the enforcement of House Bill 2 arbitrary in who is suspected of breaking the law. Additionally, HB2 itself outlines no specific consequences to breaking the law. Therefore, the bill itself seems to be an umbrella statement that suppresses the transgender community, rather than a clear cut, enforceable law.

The fact that House Bill 2 even passed by the North Carolina assembly in such a short period of time shows that there is significant support surrounding it. Defenders of the bill can be generally narrowed down to the demographic of Christians and conservatives, especially those in rural areas. Jill Knight explains this demographic in the *Charlotte Observer* when she writes, "all 11 Democrats who voted for House Bill 2 came from rural districts. And ... two-thirds of people identifying themselves as evangelical Christians supported overturning the Charlotte ordinance." This conveys that the supporters of HB2 come from a very specific and concentrated demographic. Because of this, it was difficult to find a range of sources that supported the bill. In the article "House Bill 2 Finds Support from many in Rural NC Communities," Colin Campbell brings to light the unheard support from rural communities. However, he points out that supporters are often uneducated about the transgender community, which causes oversimplified logic. He interviews Madeline Goss, a transgender female who grew up in a rural town who says, "A lot of people don't understand what the whole transgender thing is" (Campbell). As Goss points out, those in rural areas may only see gender anatomically and use "common sense" logic.

Supporters consistently call the bill “common sense” legislation. Among some examples, in rally of over 700 people supporting the bill, a person holds up a sign that reads, “It’s Common Sense: Men Don’t Belong in Women’s Bathrooms” (Bonner). Even McCrory himself calls it “common sense” in his video “Executive Order 93.” But is it really common sense? The “common sense” statement as a whole reflects a strawman fallacy because it oversimplifies gender to outward anatomy and completely dismisses the psychological factors involved in gender identity. This is reflected in a statement by Bishop Patrick Wooden in the support rally who said, “Everybody knows that a transgender woman is a man. Everybody knows that a transgender man is woman” (Bonner). With this statement, supporters of the bill crush transgender people’s freedom of speech by dismissing their right to call themselves male or female and defining them only by their anatomy. Wooden also uses a bandwagon fallacy that is largely inaccurate, and very insulting. Gavin Grimm specifically expresses the psychological factors involved in being transgender when he wrote in his article in *Washington Post*, “Our gender identities are as innate as anyone else’s.” His statement highlights the fact that switching genders is not made up of fabricated, random thoughts, but rather is an inward calling. Therefore, the “common sense” biological argument largely overlooks the topic of gender identity and unjustly dismisses the dignity and freedom of speech of transgender people.

The other significant counterargument is the cry for the “safety of women and children” in bathrooms from predators. This is a common thread in sources that support HB2. For example, there is another popular sign supporting the bill that reads, “Keep Women and Kids Safe. No men in women’s bathrooms” (Bonner). Jane Clark, a conservative supporter, reflects this claim in her article published in the *National Review* when she writes, “So a clever (or not so clever) rapist could smear on some lipstick, call himself transgender, and waltz right into a locker room full of half-dressed teenage girls.” Although this is theoretically true, there is no evidence to back up these generalizations. For example, in the academic article “Bathroom Battle Grounds and Penis Panics” Schilt and Westbrook, both sociology professors who specialize in transgender studies, convey that the hysteria over the presence of penises in women’s bathroom has no legitimate statistics to back it up. After extensive research they present the fact that “no cities or states that have passed transgender rights legislation have witnessed increases in sexual assaults in public restrooms after the laws have gone into effect” (8). Schilt and Westbrook argue that hysteria over transgender bathroom use is primarily focused on keeping female bathrooms “penis-free” rather than focusing on the effects on transgender people. The hysteria over the safety of women and children from male genitalia is mythical and does not rest of fact.

As a whole, North Carolina has faced much national opposition after passing House Bill 2. In fact, the Democratic Party of North Carolina created a website (<https://businessesagainsthb2.com>) that lists over 400 businesses that oppose House Bill 2. Among these companies are Pepsi, Facebook, Kellogs, Apple, IBM, and many more (North Carolina Democratic Party). Paypal and Duetsche Bank have both pulled back on creating jobs in North Carolina because of the discriminatory measures of the bill (Woolverton and Barnes). Additionally, according to ESPN, the NBA chose to move All-Star Weekend from Charlotte elsewhere due to the belief that North Carolina is a non-inclusive community ("NBA Moves 2017 All-Star Game from Charlotte over HB2"). The loss of business is estimated to cost North Carolina about a half a billion dollars by the end of 2018 (North Carolina Democratic Party). Overall, HB2 has not only faced opposition on a local level, but also faced large national opposition seen through businesses

House Bill 2 is not the only effort to limit transgender bathroom use, as there are other cases throughout the country. According to the National Conferences of State Legislators, nineteen states have considered bathroom bills alike (Kralik). However, North Carolina is the only state to actually pass a bill; some are pending, and most have failed (Kralik). This conveys a national pattern that recognizes bathroom bills as unjust laws. Looking forward, in October, the Supreme Court accepted a case surrounding the issue of limiting the bathroom use of transgender people. Gavin Grimm, as quoted above, is a transgender male in Gloucester High School in Virginia who was given special permission to use the bathroom of his gender identity. However, after parents and teachers complained at a school board meeting, the school required him to use either the female bathroom or go to the nurses' office. On October 28, 2016, the Supreme Court agreed to hear Gavin's case. The verdict of the case is a movement toward legally settling the issue of forcing a person to utilize the bathroom of their biological sex.

Overall, House Bill 2 did the opposite of what it set out to do and made the bathroom a place of fear for many in North Carolina. It stripped the transgender community of their right to freedom of speech and expression by forcefully defining them by their biological identity when using the bathroom. It does more harm than protection, as transgender people are statistically more likely to be harassed when using the bathroom of their biological gender. Also, the nature of the bill allows for only arbitrary enforcement based on appearance and does not state any specific consequences for breaking the law. Supporters of the bill call it "common sense" and protection for women and children rest on false generalizations rather than logic. Its "common sense" legislation is not at all common sense, but rather an excuse for an oversimplified argument that unjustly dismisses the psychological aspects and dignity of the transgender community. Also, its cry for the protection of women and children is empty hysteria that is not statistically backed whatsoever. Although Governor McCrory repealed the outwardly discriminatory legislation of HB2 in areas of

employment against the LGBT community, he has kept the “bathroom bill” in place. However, the arising Supreme Court decision may impact the fate of the bill. House Bill 2 has scratched fear and hate deeply into the bathroom stalls of North Carolina by forcing transgender people to use the bathroom of their biological sex. Who knew the freedom of speech would not only phonetically, but also literally, come to include the freedom to pee in the restroom of your gender identity?

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Questions to Consider

1. Sometimes students choose topics for an argument paper because they already have a very strong opinion about it, but Angela chose hers specifically because it was a topic she had heard about, but about which she had little former knowledge. Angela also mentions that she found herself altering her former position based upon the research she conducted. How might her process of topic selection support the idea of "research as inquiry?" What are the pros and cons of choosing a topic that you specifically *don't* have a strong opinion about? Have you ever switched positions based upon research? How might understanding "both sides" of an issue support creating an argument?
2. Angela also mentions that she had a difficult time finding reliable sources that supported the "other side" of her issue and that she had to examine many overtly biased sources in order to understand all aspects of the controversy. When studying a current public controversy, what benefits and drawbacks are there for looking at "biased" sources? Are any sources truly "unbiased?" Why or why not?
3. When drafting and revising her paper, Angela talks about how she worked to connect outside sources and the quotes she used to her own thesis statement. As you read her paper, can you pick out where and how she did this? What strategies did she use to connect her sources to her own argument? What effect does this have on the argument? How does it work to keep the reader "on track" and following Angela's logic? What would be different about this paper if Angela had not made these connections explicit?

D'Artagnan Award Honorable Mention

Category: Rhetorical Analysis

The next genre of writing we will explore is the Rhetorical Analysis, a type of analytic approach for interpreting texts that focuses on rhetorical appeals that work to persuade an audience. As discussed in the “Rhetorical Terms and Appeals” section near the beginning of this book, rhetoric examines particular aspects of persuasive texts in order to understand how they work. In a rhetorical analysis, you will be asked to analyze texts—which could be magazine ads, editorials, political speeches, images, videos, newspaper articles, commercials, or a host of other types of texts—from a rhetorical perspective.

While students often have experience with analysis prior to coming to college, many first year writers report that the rhetorical analysis is a new genre for them. Because of that, examples of this type of essay may be helpful to you so that you can get an idea of what might be expected in an analysis of this sort. Although your instructor may have specific guidelines and parameters for the assignment that are different from the examples you see here, all rhetorical analyses ask the writer to investigate a text to see how it operates rhetorically. You might consider aspects of a text such as pathos (how the text moves the emotions of the audience), ethos (the authority or character of the speaker/writer), and logos (how logically an argument is presented), as well as the timing of the text you are critiquing, the context in which it was published or distributed, the audience for which it was intended, the style or tone it takes in order to connect with the audience, the medium in which it is composed, etc. By engaging in rhetorical analysis, you will become more aware of the rhetorical texts around you in your everyday life and be able to discern the ways in which you are persuaded. Additionally, through this awareness, you can learn to craft more rhetorically effective texts yourself, as you will when you create various arguments as part of your classroom assignments.

The winners of Honorable Mention in the category of Rhetorical Analysis—Nicole Gavin (“The Rhetorical Powerhouse: Theodore Roosevelt in ‘Citizenship in a Republic’”), Jordan Lobsiger (“Macklemore’s Audacious Approach to Social Issues”), and Chris Steele (“Empathy in an Age of Divisiveness”)—each approached this assignment through examining very different texts as their starting point. In this diversity, readers can see how broadly rhetorical analysis can be applied and the depth of meaning it can offer by the close examination of the rhetorical strategies employed in any given text. Whether the object of analysis is current or historical, a presidential speech or hip-hop lyrics, rhetorical analysis can offer insights about how a text works to persuade, as well as the way it connects to larger social issues.

Nicole, Jordan, and Chris arrange their essays in a way that walk readers through the text they are analyzing in a logical fashion without resorting to an organizational scheme that is broken down in a simple “three points” fashion based upon pathos, ethos, and logos. While it may be easy to arrange a rhetorical analysis in a format where you analyze each of these three appeals, one per paragraph, this can lead to segregating the appeals more discretely than is optimal. Often, an argument may rely upon multiple appeals at once; for instance, a strong appeal to reason—such as statistical data or verifiable facts—may also serve to build the ethos of the writer as someone who is an expert in his or her field. While analyzing rhetorical appeals “separately” may make for an easy organizational strategy, it can also lead to less sophisticated analysis.

Organizing a rhetorical analysis can be challenging, especially for writers who want to present a more nuanced analysis than the simple “three points” strategy outlined above. Organization can be based upon the structure of the text, such as Jordan’s strategy to take a reader through a song in the order that it unfolds, or it can be driven by the strongest rhetorical appeals that the writer notices in the text, which is the strategy employed by both Nicole and Chris. In any case, crafting a thesis that outlines what you will analyze and tells the audience about the text is crucial in keeping your rhetorical analysis on track, focused, and easy to follow for your readers.

As you read these essays, note the way that Nicole, Jordan, and Chris highlight aspects of the texts they are analyzing, showing how these texts work to persuade, engage, and move a reader to hold a particular point of view or take a certain action. When you begin to analyze texts rhetorically, you will become more aware of how you are persuaded, as well as how you use rhetorical appeals in your own everyday life.

The Rhetorical Powerhouse: Theodore Roosevelt in “Citizenship in a Republic”

Nicole Gavin
Rhetorical Analysis

Reflection

This essay began as most essays do within the context of academic writing; with an evaluation of the rubric and the professor’s expectations. The assignment was “to analyze the rhetorical techniques used in a famous speech of your choosing.” The hardest part for me was making a decision regarding which speech to use. I wanted to choose a work that was not so popular that it had already been analyzed to death by linguists much more experienced and insightful than a college freshman, but I also wanted a speech that had a plethora of rhetorical devices to choose from, allowing me to play to my strengths. All of the history teachers at my high school had an outward, unapologetic affection for Theodore Roosevelt—a well-known historical figure, but not MLK or Hitler—so I researched his memorable speeches. Any of Theodore Roosevelt’s speeches would have been good picks, but “The Man in the Arena” was a speech that was motivating to me personally, and not so nuanced as to make it too difficult to analyze.

In writing the essay, I first annotated the speech with highlighter and pen, then wrote down all of the relevant literary devices and themes I found with their respective reference quotes. After I had all the ideas down, I chose the strongest arguments and used their main points to develop a thesis statement. Once the thesis statement was in place, it was simply a matter of writing out the ideas and explanations in full sentences, using MLA format. When it got to the point where I didn’t see any more glaring errors, I brought it to in-class peer editing, then the Writing Center, and others recognized and helped me fix the flaws I didn’t see before. Lastly, I read the essay in its entirety one more time, and turned it in.

The advice I would give to first year writers is to trust your training. You have been trained both in this ENGL 101 or 115 class, and in high school, to express your thoughts through words in essay format. These assignments are opportunities for you to demonstrate to your professor that you have learned something, and can use that knowledge to construct new thoughts and interpretations.

The Rhetorical Powerhouse: Theodore Roosevelt in "Citizenship in a Republic"

Theodore Roosevelt is known for his powerful effect on America; he presented robust ideas and opinions accompanied with an initiative and perseverance to catapult those opinions and ideas into action. As president, Roosevelt pushed an incredible amount of legislation through Congress, as well as made notable progress in America's relationships abroad. He was very persuasive to fellow legislators and common folk alike, and photographs confirm that it cannot be attributed to his good looks, but instead to his masterful use of rhetoric. Shortly after his presidency, Roosevelt stopped in Paris on April 23, 1910, during a tour of North Africa and Europe to deliver what would become one of his most iconic speeches. In his speech, "Citizenship in a Republic," President Theodore Roosevelt presents a compelling call to action of the individual citizen through his tactful manipulation of the audience, his use of figurative language, and his trustworthy and reliable ethos.

Roosevelt's goal in presenting this speech is to motivate the average American to engage fully in their identity as a citizen, thus making the country as a whole more engaged. Roosevelt himself says, "In the long run, success or failure will be conditioned upon the way in which the average man, the average woman, does his or her duty." He states that individual citizenship is the determining factor for success in a democratic republic, and thus individual citizenship at a higher level makes America a more powerful and united country. This stated goal is merely a logical syllogism: in a democratic republic, each individual citizen is taken into account. The collective of all individual citizens makes up the whole of the country. Therefore, if the standard of individual citizens is higher, America will be at a higher standard as a country. The goal itself is based in logos, which encourages the reader to listen and consider the point Roosevelt brings up afterward. Including logos leaves the audience with a sense of comfort—the ideas make logical sense, and the notion that it would be foolish of them not to follow the idea.

Roosevelt is completely aware of the audience he is speaking to and the points he must address in order to make a notable impact on them. He speaks to them directly saying, "You and those like you have received special advantages; [you have] had the opportunity for mental training; many of you have had leisure ..." He recognizes that his audience is within the upper class, and thus uses rhetorical techniques to influence them. He knows most of them are educated, therefore he chooses to use elevated language to appear on their level or above. Speaking in such a tone would intimidate the members of the lower class, but Roosevelt is aware that in this situation, his use of vocabulary will illicit feelings of respect, not intimidation. Noting that he is speaking to individuals of the upper class, Roosevelt speaks frankly in regard to democratic republics, America's position on the world stage, and structures of government with the knowledge that these more complex ideas will have meaning to the members of the audience. Respect from the audience and the audience's decision to deem the speaker intelligent contribute to Roosevelt's phronesis, depicting him as a credible source.

Roosevelt also manipulates this upper class audience by pointing out their specific tendency to become the kind of citizens who will not help the country make progress, then pointing them in the right direction, through the use of strong figurative language. Roosevelt warns, "Let the man of learning, the man of lettered leisure, beware of that queer and cheap temptation to pose to himself and to others as a cynic." Through the use of imagery and colorful language, Roosevelt clearly illustrates a character that he sees as a threat to his cause, and thus portrays the character in the villain role. He identifies that people of a higher class often have the tendency to fall into the role of the "cynical critic": timid, intellectually aloof, and cynical, yet eagerly awaiting the opportunity to critique others. His use of pathos in describing this kind of person gives the character a negative connotation, therefore eliciting feelings of shame or an urge to dissociate from this type of person. Dissuading people from acting or feeling a certain way is giving them a ticket to the metaphorical "reverse bandwagon." Roosevelt's "critic" imagery is so powerful that members of the audience feel the need to remove themselves from the critic category. His use of pathos is incredibly effective, as now the audience feels lost, looking for some guidance, open to new information, and possibly ready for a shift in lifestyle choices. Now that Roosevelt has them in a vulnerable position, he strategically includes similarly strong imagery in regards to the hero or "man in the arena" character. He describes in painful detail the prominent features of the "arena" character, equating him as the ideal individual citizen. Powerful phrases like "strives valiantly," "great enthusiasms," and "daring greatly" illicit the opposite emotions from the audience, encouraging them to hop on this bandwagon. In presenting these two opposing characters, Roosevelt polarizes the audience, not-so-gently shoving them to the "man in the arena" and insisting that there are only two choices in the matter: cynical critic or "man in the arena." Presenting this either/or fallacy almost forces the audience to get behind his depiction of the ideal individual citizen, and strive to resemble the "man in the arena" character. Roosevelt recognizes his audience and uses the particular weaknesses of that demographic to influence them to become more like his idea of the perfect individual citizen.

Roosevelt's most famous portion of this speech is the depiction of the man in the arena because he uses rhetorical devices and figurative language that evoke a call to action from the audience. Roosevelt preaches:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

A notable aspect of this paragraph is the fact that the bulk of it is just one long sentence. This speech was spoken, but in transcribing the words, there is a distinct use of semicolons to indicate the pace at which the words were spoken. Roosevelt uses many phrases of description, said in quick succession with the momentum of the speech escalating as each phrase emphasizes a new picture of this "man in the arena." The phrases between the semicolons are in a parallel structure, starting with "who ..." then a dynamic description. Using repetition and parallel structure establishes a cadence to the speech that is an effective tool in obtaining and keeping the attention of the audience. The repetition was also effective in emphasizing the point Roosevelt was trying to make, reinforcing the idea that the ideal citizen is one who experiences life, with its successes and failures.

The audience is so effectively manipulated by Theodore Roosevelt because he has constructed such a full-bodied ethos for himself, using the Populist Approach and humility. As a former President of the United States, Roosevelt knows he yields a certain power, yet he uses the Populist Approach and levels with the audience by using statements such as "yours and ours" and "you and we" to include himself in the group he is speaking to. His use of "we" instead of "I" or "me" is Roosevelt erasing his power to project his goodwill toward the reader. The order of these statements is also a subtle show of humility, as he says "yours" before the collective "ours" showing that he puts others before himself. Roosevelt's use of *eunoia* is aimed at making the listener feel as though Roosevelt is in the same situation as them and everyone is working toward the same goal.

The former president's *arête* and show of personal responsibility present another level of ethos in "Citizenship in a Republic." He plainly takes responsibility as both an individual citizen and as one of the republic's leaders saying, "It behooves us to do our best to see that the standard of the average citizen be kept high, and the average cannot be kept high unless the standard of the leaders is kept higher." He recognizes the importance of leaders being role models that individual citizens can look up to and aspire to be. He includes himself in that statement and claims responsibility, as he is the leader of all of the leaders. His accountability in this case increases the audience's awareness of his virtue and sense of personal responsibility. When the audience feels the speaker is virtuous and accountable, they are more likely to listen and act upon the speaker's thoughts and ideas.

Overall, Roosevelt is successful in getting his point across in this speech; he describes exactly what he desires from the individual citizen, demanding the standard be kept high, while taking responsibility for his own standard and the standard of those he is responsible for. Roosevelt portrays himself as an intelligible, humble, and responsible leader, grooming his audience to trust him. He uses the audience's logical reasoning and emotions to direct them to his main points and to justify his requests. Both the rhetoric and the content of the speech itself is still relevant today, as it is important to be reminded of the power that lies within the individual citizen.

Work Cited

Roosevelt, Theodore. "Citizenship in a Republic Excerpt: The Man in the Arena," delivered at the Sorbonne, in Paris, France on 23 April, 1910. *The Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt*. www.theodore-roosevelt.com/trspeeches.html.

Questions to Consider

1. In this rhetorical analysis, Nicole breaks down the idea of ethos into sub-categories of phronesis, arête, and eunoia, rather than simply analyzing "ethos" as a category. What are the effects of this strategy in Nicole's paper? As a reader, were you able to glean a more nuanced understanding of how ethos operates? Or were you unsure about the terminology? How does this view of how ethos works in Roosevelt's speech help the reader of this analysis understand its rhetorical effects in this text? Would it have been more or less effective if Nicole had only discussed ethos as a whole? Why?
2. Students often struggle to create an effective thesis statement for a rhetorical analysis paper. Do you think that Nicole's thesis is a clear, focused, statement about the upcoming analysis? How does this thesis work to help organize the rest of her paper? Are there other ways she might have phrased this thesis? Could it be even more focused, descriptive, or nuanced? How would revising the thesis have potentially affected the structure of the paper?
3. In any text that one wishes to analyze rhetorically, choices have to be made about which parts to focus on and how to narrow down the analysis. Nicole mentions that she began by annotating the speech and then finding the strongest arguments, after which she developed a thesis around the main points she wanted to make. Do you think that this is an effective strategy for developing a rhetorical analysis? How would this change if the text under analysis was a visual ad? Or a video clip? What other strategies can you imagine for "collecting data" about a text to rhetorically analyze?

Macklemore's Audacious Approach to Social Issues

Jordan Lobsiger
Rhetorical Analysis

Reflection

When I received this assignment, I had no clue what I was going to write about. I thought I might analyze a speech or article but lacked the inspiration to write about either. However, I am a strong believer in the power of music so I scrolled through all the albums on my phone in search of an idea. Finally, I came across *This Unruly Mess I've Made*, Macklemore's newest album. The final song, "White Privilege II," is a call to action that I felt would make for a thought-provoking rhetorical analysis.

I was challenged with establishing a method of reflection on racial issues that did not isolate a specific population of my audience. I wanted my paper to read like a discussion, not like a lecture. I approached this paper by focusing solely on the themes and rhetoric and not my personal beliefs. I started by listening to the song and reading the lyrics at the same time, allowing myself to really be invested in the song. After that, I color coded the lyrics by ethos, logos, and pathos, then made notes in the margins about what I thought Macklemore was trying to convey to the listener. While drafting, I thought of my paper as a speech. Reading aloud helps to emphasize awkward and repetitive phrases. Most of my revising was for clarity and conciseness. I believe that reading the paper aloud was the most effective method for editing and development.

Macklemore's Audacious Approach to Social Issues

Racism has been continuously present in the United States, from building the country on stolen land to profiling peaceful protests held on behalf of minorities. During the vicious presidential election in 2016, racial discrimination became more apparent to the general American public through the recent prevalence of hate speech. Society's struggle to address and combat the current intensification of racial prejudice has motivated influential voices, such as actors, writers, and musicians, to comment on racial issues and raise awareness. Among those is Ben Haggerty, a Grammy-winning rapper from Kent, Washington. On February 26, 2016, Haggerty, better known as Macklemore, released *This Unruly Mess I've Made*, an album intended to disrupt societal norms. He recognized that his music generally appealed to young, white people after his first album, *The Heist*, was released, so he composed the last track on his second album to convey a message to his audience. The song, "White Privilege II," uses rhetoric to communicate the reality of white privilege in a society filled with unconscious white supremacists.

Macklemore understands his audience and uses the beginning of his song to build a connection to the way he feels about standing up against racism and how his audience may feel. He describes joining a procession of marchers for Black Lives Matter, stating what is going through his mind in the lines, "'is this awkward? Should I even be here marching?' ... I want to take a stance 'cause we are not free, and then I thought about it. We are not 'we' ... Is it my place to give my two cents or should I stand on the side and shut my mouth?" (Macklemore). This approach allows him to grasp the listener's attention as he daringly outs himself as a self-doubting ally in the fight against racism, making him vulnerable and open to the listener. The young, white people who do not know if they have a place in talking about race issues are his intended audience and he uses his own self-doubt to appeal to their uncertainty. Furthermore, the song-writer alludes to the social issue being protested, in this case the surge in police killings of unarmed black men, to encourage the listener to question their own views, through the lyrics, "I watch and stand in front of a line of police that look the same as me, only separated by a badge, a baton, a can of Mace, a mask, a shield, a gun with gloves and hands that gives an alibi in case somebody dies behind a bullet that flies out of the nine. Takes another child's life, on-site" followed by the sound of a gunshot (Macklemore). He also uses the long list of armory to show that, like many of the protestors, he is unarmed yet the police are excessively fortified. The words are spoken as if they are a call to action, utilizing swift articulation and a passionately-angry tone. The dramatic presentation of this claim appeals to the emotions of the listener in a unique way by using timbre of voice and imagery to make them feel a sense of urgency. Macklemore has established a relationship with the listener by showing his compassion for the cause, his lack of direct experience, and his empathy, allowing him to openly shift into his next key points.

The second verse attempts to emphasize the exploitation of different cultures in the United States. The songwriter implements references to historic events in order to portray that the country is built upon stolen land, people, and ideals. He supports his argument by claiming that aspects of hip-hop, pop, and rap, such as the drums and the accents used in rap, have been stolen and modified by "unconscious" white producers to make money (Macklemore). He plays from their perceived tendencies in the lyrics, "Go buy a big-ass lawn, go with your big-ass house, get a big-ass fence, keep people out. It's all stolen anyways, can't you see that now?" (Macklemore). In these lyrics, Macklemore references the land being purchased now despite that it was initially stolen from the Native Americans when the land was colonized. His approach creates an ethical appeal to the listener, permitting them to understand current entrepreneurship in the light of past oppression and disregard for other cultures. He takes the point further when he claims that the years of indifference cannot be abrogated, regardless of individual attempts to rectify them. He then asks the listener, "You said publicly, 'rest in peace, Mike Brown.' You speak about equality, but do you really mean it? Are you marching for freedom, or when it's convenient?" (Macklemore). He uses rhetorical questions to encourage the listener

towards evaluating their own motives in taking a stance against racism. In this point, he also portrays that taking a stand can be considered exploiting the cause, depending on the individual advocate's motives. While this concept may seem contradictory to his overall theme, it appears that Macklemore is trying to present the possibility that unconscious white supremacy plays into the feeling of societal pressure to take a stance for the cause, despite personal sincerity. He ends the second verse by asking, "What's the intention?" (Macklemore). Macklemore repeats the question twice to emphasize the lack of faith he has in his own intentions as well as others.

The uncertainty carries over into the fourth verse when Macklemore begins to analyze other views of the issue. He introduces the white supremacist view when he summarizes an encounter with the mother of one of his fans, who praises him for the positivity in his rap music yet tells him that the protesting going on is dumb because she believes that a police officer is not at fault for shooting an individual who runs after being pulled over (Macklemore). The songwriter then includes outsourced quotes from white individuals who are mostly defensive or unaware of the severity of the issue. The addition of that material helps recognize opinions on racial issues that differ from his own and gives him the opportunity to be understanding of them. Macklemore points out that, "it seems like we're more concerned with being called racist than we actually are with racism" (Macklemore). His statement is used to clarify a motive for being passive and to introduce his process of thinking through his own self-doubt. He effectively avoids ostracizing members of his audience by communicating that his purpose is not to attack the portion of the public that is unaware, but to be open to them. He asks himself "What if I actually read an article, actually had a dialogue, actually looked at myself, actually got involved? If I'm aware of my privilege and do nothing at all, I don't know" (Macklemore). His questions propose possible solutions to the song's overall issue, yet are followed by an unanswered question to further exemplify his insecurity. Macklemore's questions are directed toward his own experience, which keeps his tone from seeming accusatory while inviting his audience to ask themselves the same questions. The songwriter digs deeper into his conscience when he notes that he makes the effort to be politically correct but fails to use his voice to speak up when black people are dying unjustly (Macklemore). Macklemore provides a contrast within this verse by including a declaration of certainty in the middle of self-doubting statements, which appeals to his listeners by showing that interconnecting political correctness with standing up for other races helped him create a center of thought that is morally unambiguous.

The songwriter's confidence guides the rest of the piece as he defines white supremacy's existence in history and compels the listener with the repeated phrase "take all we want from black culture, but will we stand up for black lives?" (Macklemore). The phrase encapsulates Macklemore's predominant themes of stolen culture and unconscious white supremacy. His open admittance of his position as a self-doubting ally allows him to connect with his intended audience effectively by appealing to their equivocal nature. Despite the internal

struggle he faces with his place in the fight, his ideas are compelling and successfully communicated without targeting and isolating specific groups within society. Racial issues are a sensitive topic; therefore, in discussing the issue in his own uncertainty, Macklemore provides a bold and innovative perspective that allows him to communicate and relate his frustrations while claiming ignorance and opening himself to criticism. The song effectively utilizes rhetoric to define the writer's main ideas while keeping the listener engaged.

Works Cited

Macklemore and Ryan Lewis. "White Privilege II." *This Unruly Mess I've Made*, Macklemore LLC and Alternative Distribution Alliance, 2016.

Questions to Consider

1. Jordan notes that she wrote this paper by "focusing solely on the themes and rhetoric and not my personal beliefs" and that she also wanted it to sound more like a discussion than a lecture. Do you think that she accomplishes these aims? What strategies does she use to promote that tone and purpose? What might be the difficulties in focusing only on the way a text is constructed while specifically ignoring one's own personal attitudes or beliefs about the argument? Is that possible to accomplish? How?
2. The organizational strategy for this rhetorical analysis takes the reader through the song in chronological order. Does this strategy work to keep the reader on track and engaged? Are there other ways Jordan might have arranged this analysis? Why might she have chosen this approach for this particular text?
3. Like Nicole, Jordan also mentions how she initially approached this text in order to begin her rhetorical analysis. Do you think this was an effective strategy for analyzing a song? What other ways can you imagine gaining a greater understanding of the rhetorical aspects of a musical text? She also discusses how she thought of her paper as though it were a speech and that she gained insights about her work by reading it out loud. How do you think this approach may have affected the drafting process, tone, or word choice Jordan used? What can a writer learn about his or her own writing by reading it out loud? How can this strategy be used for other forms of writing, drafting, or revising?

Empathy in an Age of Divisiveness

Chris Steele

Rhetorical Analysis

Reflection

When selecting a topic for this assignment, I wanted to explore a topic that analyzed current events from a more nuanced perspective. In the past, I've always had difficulty properly understanding worldviews different from my own, and Bader's article gave me the opportunity to take a step back from the toxic political rhetoric in this country and try to better understand those who disagree with me. Bader's article also considered events from a psychological point of view, tying in neatly with my academic interests.

One of the major issues that I wanted to fix with my writing style was an unwillingness to change the direction of my paper if certain ideas failed to develop. Throughout the writing process, I forced myself to scrap several ideas once it was evident that they were not developing into well-reasoned arguments. For me, the greatest challenge during the revision process was focusing on a single stylistic or grammatical element in each run-through of my paper. Once I had solidified the ideas behind my paper, I re-read my paper multiple times, each time scanning for a specific component of my writing style. I believe that this process works wonders on the quality of your writing, and I highly recommend that you do so, even if it is more time-consuming than a holistic revision style.

Empathy in an Age of Divisiveness

Donald Trump's victory came as a surprise to most people. They discredited him, believed that he had no chance of winning on a platform rooted in nationalism, and yet he prevailed. How? This is the question Michael Bader sets out to answer. In his article titled "The Decline of Empathy and the appeal of Right-Wing Politics," Bader attempts to explain the underlying motives behind supporting Trump and the GOP. Through a carefully chosen structure, a deep understanding of his audience, and a wealth of data and statistics, Bader effectively persuades his audience that the root of Donald Trump's appeal is the decline of empathy in American society.

In this article, Bader takes a variety of studies done on the topic of empathy and uses them to draw conclusions about the current political climate. He begins by citing current research done by several psychologists. They discovered that when a child is temporarily divorced from an emotional connection

with their mother, they become frustrated and angry, eventually showing signs of hopelessness and despair. This process, if lengthened, can stunt growth and prevent the development of empathy in a child. Bader claims that there is a connection between these discoveries on empathy and attachment and the thought processes of many Republicans, many of whom feel marginalized and believe that the government has become unresponsive to their daily struggles. He also argues that inequality, discrimination, and social exclusion can also foster an environment where responsiveness and empathy are sorely lacking. The reason many turned to Donald Trump, Bader believes, is because he empathized with the toils of many working-class individuals and was responsive to their concerns. Bader concludes with a message of unity, trusting that his audience will be able to find common ground with Trump supporters, stating that "in the end, we are all in this together" (Bader).

The message of Bader's article is addressed primarily to those who are bewildered by the character and appeal of Trump. Progressives, liberals, and independents are the target audience, made clear by the glossed over political talking points. He takes for granted that the audience will agree with his positions on certain political issues. For example, near the end of the article, Bader boldly asserts that, "the right-wing media machine, one that has reached its zenith in the Trump campaign, has stoked the fires of the scapegoating reflex," and "poor and middle class whites have been sensitized to the sounds of racist dog-whistles for generations" (Bader). These political assertions are never backed up with substantive points and would evidently fail to persuade anyone reading his article of their validity. Bader likely knows this, but he refrains from spending the time to back those claims up because he believes that many in the audience already agree with him. In writing an article interested in fostering an understanding of the motives of Trump and Republican supporters, Bader clearly understands that his audience does not consist of those who agree with Trump and the GOP.

Bader's audience has likely developed pre-conceived notions of Trump supporters and will be skeptical of his challenges to their beliefs. Having that in mind, Bader structures his article deliberately, choosing to reveal the more hard-hitting ideas near the end to better convey his argument. By doing so, he prevents the audience from immediately rejecting his ideas based on their existing beliefs about Trump supporters and Republicans in general. Each idea is presented in response to another as he slowly builds to his conclusion, allowing for a skeptical reader to be taken through Bader's thought process as he draws connections between two seemingly disparate ideas. He begins by citing the relatively benign and uncontroversial discoveries made by developmental psychologists regarding empathy. For example, he states, "higher cognitive functions, including language, can suffer as the brain instinctively relies on more primitive regions to deal with an unresponsive environment" (Bader).

The perceived indifference of the government towards Republicans and Trump supporters, Bader believes, is the root of Donald Trump's support, but he intentionally refrains from mentioning that here. He only reveals the connection to the current political climate at the end of the article, by claiming that "[Donald Trump] empathized with the traumatic losses and helplessness of the white middle and working classes. He helped them feel part of something bigger than themselves, a 'movement,' which combatted their isolation" (Bader). This sentence, without the preceding quote, would have likely been disregarded or met with heavy skepticism, but Bader's strategic pacing makes his conclusion more poignant and likely to be believed.

Further backing Bader's claims are a wide variety of data from multiple sources. He provides study results and analysis from child psychiatrists, epidemiologic studies on inequality, surveys documenting a decrease in social interaction, and research done by prominent sociologists. This wealth of data builds credibility to both Bader and his argument, as providing multiple sources more effectively convinces skeptical readers. For example, studies on the decrease of social relationships show "stunning declines in virtually every form of social and civic participation" (Bader). This evidence later supports Bader's claim that a declining social environment leads to a decline of empathy, a problem exemplified in the current political climate. By providing well-documented sources, the audience is more inclined to believe and support Bader's conclusions derived from that data.

One particularly effective source provides an (admittedly less objective) analysis, done by Berkeley sociologist Arlie Hochschild, of the thoughts of stereotypical Tea Party voters. Hochschild, who has had extensive experience with Tea Party activists, describes a hypothetical situation in which a Tea Party member perceives that they, in waiting in a long line for the "American Dream," are being passed up by others (minorities, women, immigrants, etc.) and are not being acknowledged for their hard work and patience (Bader). They believe that these other individuals aren't following "the rules" and are cutting in line (Bader). This story is especially effective because it challenges many of the stereotypes some members of Bader's audience likely hold regarding Tea Party members. The content of the story is not meant to be accurate, but it is meant to be representative of the mind of a typical Tea Party voter, and Bader expects the reader to attempt to parse the argument and the unique perspective being portrayed. He does not want the audience to agree with the Tea Party member; in fact, he states that the story "clearly taps into racist sentiments" (Bader). The goal is to get the reader to stop and consider the point of view being expressed, to try to sympathize with the individual and their values even if they seem heavily misguided. The "hidden ideologies" behind the actions and beliefs of this individual need to be acknowledged, as Bader reinforces the importance of "understanding the subjective experience of [this person] in the deepest possible way" (Bader).

While the story of a racist Tea Party voter's hypothetical view of the world provides insight, it fails to tell the entire story. It would be unfair to consider that story representative of all Tea Party members, and Bader understands that. In recognizing the limitations of his claims, Bader addresses potential problems with narrowing his argument to include only Trump's supporters. He acknowledges that the decline of empathy is ubiquitous, as "our society is increasingly one in which people can't find responsive faces or attuned reliable relationships anywhere" (Bader). Everyone suffers from this effect, and the social institutions that Trump voters felt disconnected from could have also served to alienate those of lower economic status or minorities that have been historically oppressed. By providing a concession statement and recognizing the limits of his argument, Bader builds his own personal credibility. He recognizes that Trump supporters are not alone in succumbing to a world of social isolation and divisiveness, realizing that they are victims, not antagonists.

Bader presents a unique and persuasive argument about the rise of Donald Trump in this past election and the way in which people from both sides of the aisle should move forward in the coming years. Knowing his audience and how to persuade them allowed him to effectively pass on a message of unity, not divisiveness. He asked his readers to develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the working and middle class individuals who feel left out of the political conversation. Society, they believe, has alienated them and they believe that they have been ignored and are being passed up in an ever-changing world. The decline of empathy applies to everyone, and Bader implores us to be aware of the pain that every individual suffers when they believe they are being overlooked, even if we do not agree with their beliefs or attitudes. Bader believes that a better understanding of the situation will allow people to create and maintain relationships across the aisle, destroying the "empathy wall" that currently divides America.

Works Cited

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Questions to Consider

1. Chris says that he chose this article because it offered a nuanced analysis of a political situation and gave him “the opportunity to take a step back from the toxic political rhetoric in this country and try to better understand those who disagree with me.” What are the benefits and challenges in choosing a text to analyze that presents a perspective different from one’s own? In your opinion, does Chris stay on track with analyzing Baden’s article without injecting his own views of the issue at large? Are there any places where his own view “comes through” in the writing? How does his position in relation to the larger issue affect his analysis, if at all?
2. According to his thesis, Chris chose to focus his analysis on the structure, an understanding of audience, and the presentation of data and statistics in his rhetorical analysis. What kinds of textual evidence does he give for supporting his claims about how this article is constructed? One of Chris’s focuses of analysis was the structure of the article he analyzed—what methods might Chris have employed in order to structure his own rhetorical analysis? How might he have chosen what information to provide first, second, or third? Are there other ways that this might have been structured? How would that have changed the paper?
3. In his reflection, Chris talks about his revision process and how he reread his paper multiple times, “focusing on a single stylistic or grammatical element in each run-through of [his] paper” and that this worked much better for the quality of the overall work than a “holistic revision style.” What information do you think can be garnered by reading and rereading a paper looking at one particular aspect of it each time? How does that compare to reading the paper holistically? What methods do you employ or find effective when you read to revise?

Category: Narrative

You may be assigned a narrative in your ENGL 101 or 115 courses, though it may be called by different names. Some genres that incorporate this form of writing include personal narratives, narrative arguments, and ethnographies. In all cases, a narrative will tell a story and typically ask you to write in first person, addressing your audience as “I.” Unlike more formal or “objective-sounding” academic writing, narratives use vivid description and words that evoke emotion in readers, painting a picture of a situation or feeling so that your readers have the sense of “being there” when you tell your story.

Narratives can serve a variety of purposes in ENGL 101 and 115 and assignments involving narrative may vary greatly from class to class. *Personal narratives* may require you to tell a story of some aspect of your life, placing yourself within a certain cultural context, or ask you to examine an important event in your life that has shaped who you are today. An *ethnography*, which is typically an examination of a people and their cultures, may be written about yourself as a type of narrative. In this case, an assignment might require you to take a step back from your everyday assumptions and question your own cultural practices, applying an analytic lens to your own life the way an anthropologist would examine a less familiar society. A *narrative argument* uses story to make an argument where the narrative serves as a representative anecdote to illustrate a larger issue. While each of these types of assignments serves a different purpose, in all cases you would use story, description, dialog, and a first-person perspective in your writing.

In the first essay, Eric Schultheiss tells the reader a first-hand story from his own life about a friend who needed his support in order to come out to his family. Eric’s story is rich in detail, both about the actual, material events that were occurring, and also about the emotional tenor of the surprising, tumultuous experience. He foregrounds the narrative with an explanation of his compelling title, “The Subtweet Phenomenon,” which he says will make more sense as the story progresses. Eric also explains how this experience with his friend helped quell any doubts he had about his ability to thrive in his future profession, showing how these pivotal moments in our lives can serve a larger purpose to illuminate, offer insight, or help us find direction when we feel uncertain.

Sarah Ochieng shares her experiences of coming to America (and Xavier University) after growing up in Nairobi, Kenya and her surprise at the stereotypes of being thought of as “primitive” that she faced in her new surroundings. “Don’t Put Me in a Box: Autoethnography About Being Primitive” is a detail-rich ethnography that connects Sarah’s own experiences to those of others and situates that within a cultural context. Through interviews, surveys, experimentation, and research, Sarah came to understand the biases she and others faced. Through this ethnography, readers can understand more about the effects of stereotyping as well as how to combat it.

In her narrative argument, “Growing Together: The Importance of Moral Education at University,” Isabel DeMarco begins with her own experiences at Xavier by reflecting on incidents of racism on campus in the fall of 2016. Through this reflection, Isabel argues that it is the duty of a university to provide moral education that focuses on equality and upholding conduct that is in alignment with those values. Using research to back up her claims, Isabel argues that college is a time when students are in transition and are learning about life beyond their home communities. Because of this, college students have the ability to be positively influenced by their educational experiences, thus universities have a duty to address morals and values, as well as disciplinary knowledge.

In your ENGL 101 or 115 classes, you may have the opportunity to write a narrative of some kind, and while your particular assignment may differ from these examples, there are guidelines of storytelling you can take away from the essays written by Eric, Sarah, and Isabel. As you read, notice how they tell their stories—what details they give, how you react or feel when you read, and the effects of their descriptions—and then remember these concepts when you craft your own narratives. We all tell stories in our lives every day, whether as an official assignment or not. Storytelling is an important aspect of culture and social interaction, and learning to craft an effective narrative in your writing gives you the opportunity to tell your story to wider audiences.

The Subtweet Phenomenon

Eric Schultheiss

Personal Narrative

Reflection

"The Subtweet Phenomenon" is an autobiographical narrative that I wrote for my ENGL 101 course during my second semester at Xavier University. The essay delves into a personal coming out story that involves a friend of mine. Initially I was afraid to write about something so personal, and my initial draft for this essay was about a completely different personal experience. My first draft of the essay felt dry and uninteresting, so I chose to step out of my comfort zone and switch topics halfway through the assignment.

Choosing to share this story was difficult at first, but after meeting with my professor during her office hours and discussing my rough draft I felt much more comfortable sharing this story with my peers. Before submitting my final draft of the paper I had two peers and the Writing Center review my paper. Every comment that I received from these reviews helped me during the revision process, which allowed me to create a strong narrative essay. My advice to any first year writer is to believe in your writing and in yourself. It might sound a bit cheesy, but writing, revising, and submitting a paper that you are confident about can be the difference between a good paper and a great paper.

The Subtweet Phenomenon

I want to make something very clear—this paper has nothing to do with Twitter. The title is a reference to a dilemma that I (and the friends who I recruited to help me) faced when trying to find a word to describe a specific feeling. The phenomenon I am referring to is hard to describe. The best way I have found to word it is this: when two people are having a separate conversation and you (a third person listening to the conversation) mentally acknowledge that the conversation is relevant and applicable to your own personal life. This idea may be hard to grasp right now, but it will make more sense as the essay progresses.

One evening during the summer after my senior year of high school, I found my day winding to a close as I finished mowing the lawn. I had been working outside most of the day and I was finally finished. I went inside to change clothes and clean myself up. As I stepped into the shower I couldn't help but wonder how many days had gone by like this, following a monotonous routine. Getting up, doing some work outside on the lawn or around the pool, going to a friend's house to hangout, and then coming home. Ever since graduation I had

felt like I was in a rut. College was just around the corner and I was already questioning my choice to be a psychology major. I chose to be a psych major because I loved the study of the mind, and as someone who has struggled with depression for a few years I wanted to become a therapist to try to help people with problems similar to my own. I had been told that it takes a very unique type of person to become a therapist, and I was afraid that I wasn't cut out to be one of those people.

After drying myself off I checked my phone, which I had been ignoring for most of the day, and I saw one missed call. The missed call was from my friend, Kenny. Kenny and I first met during our junior year. We ended up being partners in a Robotics course, and we had been friends ever since. Kenny had left me a voicemail, which struck me as odd since people never leave voicemails nowadays. I opened my phone and checked his message.

"Hey Eric ... I need to talk to you. Something really bad happened today ... and I'm scared. Could you come over sometime today? I might not have my phone on me, but you can just come over whenever."

Kenny's voice was audibly shaken over the phone. I quickly shot a text to Kenny saying "on my way" while grabbing the keys to my car and hustling out the door. As I left my mother asked where I was going, but in my rush I didn't even notice her question and I left without any explanation.

As I was starting the car, my mind was going a million miles a minute. I knew that I was Kenny's best friend because he always asked me for help or advice when he had to make a big decision—but this was different. This obviously wasn't the typical "Who should I ask to Prom" kind of question. The car finally started and the radio blared to life. Normally that's the perfect volume for me, but today it ruined my train of thought. I shut the radio off and drove off.

As I reached the end of my neighborhood I could hear my phone buzzing in the cup holder in front of me. A contact picture of my mother and me flashed on the screen along with the message: *Call From: Lisa Schultheiss*. I stared at the phone, quickly weighing the consequences of choosing to ignore the call. *Call From: Lisa Schultheiss*. After the second ring I reluctantly answered the phone as I turned onto the interstate.

"Hello, Mom."

"Eric, where do you think you're going? I'm tired of you always leaving the house and not telling anyone what you're doing. Just because you're 18 doesn't mean—"

"I'm going to Kenny's, Mom. He called and something sounded wrong, I'm going to check up on him."

"I don't care where you're going, you can't just leave without my permission. You need to come home. Now."

"Mom, I think Kenny's in serious trouble, I want to go—"

"I'm serious. Now, Eric."

And then she hung up. That went just as well as I had expected. My mother and I had always butted heads. It always seemed to be over the most trivial things, but if there was one thing both of us were good at it was making

mountains out of molehills. Normally I tried to be a good kid; I followed the rules and tried to be helpful around the house, but my mother and I seemed to be at odds anyway. I can admit that 95% of the time when my mother was angry with me, I was in the wrong, but this time was different. I knew I was doing the right thing and I wasn't going to turn around. I set my phone to do not disturb and put it into my pocket.

The drive to Kenny's house normally takes about 20 minutes. Today I made it there in 14 minutes. I went through back roads to avoid traffic and I kept a firm foot on the gas pedal; I wanted to get to Kenny's house as soon as possible. As I turned into his gravel driveway, I slowed down. Kenny lived out in the woods and his driveway was long and only half of it was finished. I proceeded along the twists and turns of his driveway with caution.

The tires of my car crunched the gravel at the top of Kenny's driveway as I came to a stop. While I got out of the car, I picked up my phone to tell Kenny I had arrived. When I opened it, I saw multiple messages from my mother, but I decided leave them unread. I texted Kenny that I had arrived and I began walking towards the back door. Kenny lived in a huge wooden house, and whenever I came over he always let me in through the basement door. We always hung out in his basement because it was beautifully furnished with a pool table, old slot machines, a huge TV, and a big closet full of his dad's old hunting equipment. When I reached the sliding glass door, I could see that the lights were off. The basement I knew so fondly looked so eerie and forgotten in the dark that the hair on the back of my neck began to stand on end.

My phone lit up with a message from Kenny saying "Ok" and after a few seconds I saw Kenny walk out of what I believe was the bathroom—it was so dark that I couldn't tell. It looked as though he had emerged from the darkness itself. Kenny unlocked the door and as I opened it to come in he stopped me. "We can't talk here," he said, as he began to put on his shoes. He could tell I was confused and before I asked where we were going, he shook the keys in his hand while gesturing at the camper across the pond. Once he was ready, he came outside while locking the back door behind himself, and we began to make our way to the camper.

We walked around the pond in complete silence. I couldn't help but think about the last time that the two of us had went to this camper alone. It was during the week of our December midterms, Kenny had asked me to come hangout and study. We had been going over Pre-Calc for a while and we decided to take a break and go start a bonfire outside the camper. After lots of laughing at our inability to start a decent fire, we went inside the camper to warm up. When we got inside, Kenny and I started talking. We began talking about the people we had crushes on, and eventually I felt comfortable enough to confide something in Kenny. I came out to Kenny, something I had been afraid to do for quite some time. Kenny's family was very homophobic, and I was worried he was the same way. But that wasn't going to stop me—Kenny was my friend and I wanted to be able to be genuine with him. I'll never forget how Kenny reacted. His face slowly grew into a big smile.

He didn't say anything right away, so after a couple of seconds I asked him what he was thinking. He looked up and immediately crossed the bed we had been sitting on to give me a hug. I was a mixture of relieved and confused. Before I could say anything, Kenny told me that he thought that he was bisexual too. He went on to say that he had been feeling off about the relationships in his life lately, but he hadn't been able to put that into words. He was so worried that something was wrong with him, and he was afraid to talk to his parents about it because he knew they would get angry with him. Kenny and I talked for a long time after that, and when I eventually had to leave, he hugged me again and thanked me for helping him process everything that he had been feeling.

Back in the present, we had just reached the camper. As Kenny unlocked the screen door I finally put it together. We stepped inside the camper and sat down on the bed, just like we had in December. Once we were both situated, Kenny confirmed what I had been thinking.

"Eric, my parents took my phone earlier today. They saw some messages that made them suspicious so they continued to look through the rest of my phone. They found out that I'm bi ... and they got really upset. My mom cried and asked me how I could do this to her. My dad told me he didn't want 'someone like me' living in his house. I'm so scared. What am I supposed to do?"

My heart sank. Kenny's parents had reacted to his sexual orientation in an awful way, and to make the situation even worse, he didn't get to tell them himself. Coming out to my parents was terrifying, and I knew they would react well. Even though my mother and I butted heads often, at the end of the day I knew that she still loved me. I couldn't begin to imagine how scared and alone Kenny was feeling. I tried my best to help comfort Kenny, but after talking for a while, it became clear to me that supportive words were not enough for this situation. I knew the only way to help in this situation was to make sure Kenny knew he was safe in his own home.

"Kenny, I think we need to have your parents come down here and talk about this. I can keep telling you that it'll be okay, but I can't change anything. That's something you have to do."

"But they're the problem, Eric. I don't want to talk to them. That'll just make it worse."

"Kenny, talking to them is the only way this situation will change. Your parents still care about you. They're just reacting so strongly right now because they were not prepared for the news they received. If you want to fix this, you need to reach out to them."

Kenny was quiet for a few seconds and then he said that I was right. We both agreed that it would be best to talk to one parent at a time. Kenny called his home phone and his mom picked up. He asked her to come out to where he was, and shortly after, he hung up. We watched through the camper window and, after a minute, we saw Kenny's mom making her way around the pond towards the camper.

After Kenny's mom arrived at the camper, we moved outside to the swing set near the fire pit. The camper had begun to get a bit stuffy with three people in it, so the change in scenery was welcomed. Kenny's mom asked him why

he wanted her to come outside, and Kenny fell silent. As the silence persisted, I made the decision to speak up. I told her that Kenny was very scared about the events that unfolded earlier that day and that he needed to talk about it. The conversation continued in this fashion—Kenny’s mom digging deeper into what was bothering Kenny, Kenny struggling to articulate his feelings, and me helping Kenny find the right words to express what was wrong. The conversation began with Kenny’s sexuality, and eventually stemmed into other topics. Kenny’s mom would always begin her sentences with “you know I love you, but ...” and then begin to say what bothered her (a few examples being his grades, his work ethic, and his plans for college). As Kenny and his mother talked, I couldn’t help but feel as though I was watching my own mother talking to me. Everything, from the things Kenny’s mom wanted him to do, to the way Kenny responded, was so reminiscent of conversations my mother and I had engaged in so many times. This is the “Subtweet Phenomenon”—the feeling that you’re watching two people reenact a portion of your own life. It was surreal at first, but since I knew the points that Kenny and his mom were trying to get across I could help both of them communicate much faster and more efficiently than my mother and I had been able to.

After a few hours of talking, Kenny’s mom stood up to leave. She was visibly exhausted. Before she left she turned to Kenny and said, “Kenny, you’re my only son and I will always love you, no matter what. I reacted the way I did earlier because I was surprised. Learning to accept this part of you ... won’t be easy for me. But I’m willing to try if you’re sure that’s who you are.”

She proceeded to hug her son and tell him one more time that she loved him. Then she turned to me.

“Eric, I want to thank you. Normally I would have never wanted one of Kenny’s friends to be here for something like this ... but you really helped. It could have been because you have already come out to your parents, or something else, but you seemed to know just the right words to use whenever I was at a loss. I’m glad you were here. Thank you.”

She hugged me goodbye before she left. I checked my phone to see that it was nearly midnight, and I told Kenny that I needed to head home. Kenny hugged me goodbye and thanked me for coming over to help. He said that I helped him talk through his problems with his mother, even when he was afraid to do so. We said goodbye and I started heading towards my car.

As I rounded the pond, I realized something. I had just effectively functioned as a family therapist. I had done something that I was worried I wouldn’t be able to do. I operated under the pressure of the situation and helped Kenny and his mom get back on the same page. This realization gave me hope for my future, and this experience further fueled my desire to become a therapist. I reached my car and sat down in the driver’s seat. While starting the car, I called my mother. She picked up immediately.

“Hey Mom, I know you’re mad at me but hear me out. You won’t believe what just happened.”

Questions to Consider

1. Eric entitled his essay “The Subtweet Phenomenon” and begins his narrative with the line: “I want to make something very clear—this paper has nothing to do with Twitter.” He goes on to give a brief explanation of the title, but then lets the audience know that they will understand the title more as the story progresses. What effect does this have upon the reader? How did you react to this explanation when you first read it? What are some other ways that a writer could produce a similar effect?
2. In his narrative, Eric provides a lot of details—what he did that day, how he felt, the things he thought about, etc. Even though these details do not always “move the story forward,” how do they work to enhance the overall story? What is the purpose of providing vivid descriptions to the reader? What do we get to know about the narrator that we might not know without these descriptions? How would the story change if these elements were omitted?
3. Eric also uses dialog in his story to show the reader how conversations unfolded. Do you think this is an effective way to tell a story? What insights do we gain by “listening in” on a conversation that might be lost if he had chosen to tell the story without dialog? How and when can dialog work effectively in a narrative? How does it move or inform the reader?

Don't Put Me in a Box: Autoethnography About Being Primitive

Sarah Ochieng
Ethnography

Reflection

I am so humbled for being considered a good writer at Xavier University. The truth is that I love writing and most of the writing I do is about things I am passionate about, including bringing awareness to Social Justice, Racism, and Equal Rights. As a writer, my aim is to always write from the heart and to educate the reader.

When my English professor asked us to write an autoethnography, I reflected about my life experience and chose one that would bring awareness to how international students are treated at Xavier and hoped that anyone who read my essay would be informed about those issues and, hopefully, be inspired to take action to do something to change them. I knew that at least three or four students would read my essay during our class peer review.

Before writing my essays, the first thing I always do is reflect on the essay topic and jot down ideas of what I want to write. This reflection always takes time (approximately two days to even a week) and is usually the most challenging part for me. For this reason, I always prefer working on my essay assignments immediately as they are assigned to me. This gives me more time to think about what I want to write about, jot down ideas, and write a passionate paper. Although I spend a lot of time reflecting on an essay topic, after the reflection process, I always find it easy to write my essay in one sitting. I am able to do this because of the jotting down of ideas I do when reflecting.

After finishing my essay, I usually proofread it and during this process, I use software such as Grammarly (free version), which automatically corrects my grammar. This process is then followed by a class peer review. (I often aim to finish the paper before the peer review process begins so that I can get effective critiques from my peers and my professors since she also reviews our work.) After receiving the critiques, the next step is editing the essay and then visiting the Writing Center. At the Writing Center, I usually only check for grammar and structure errors. I always prefer that Writing Center workers read my paper out loud for me so that I can hear how it sounds from an outsider's perspective. Also, some professors usually give students extra credit for visiting the Writing Center so I often aim to get those extra points. These are the same steps I took in revising this essay.

The most challenging thing about this assignment was reflecting on my Xavier experience and interviewing people about how they perceive the word *primitive*. I was shocked to realize that many international students have experienced discrimination simply because of their nationality. Learning that discrimination still exists was saddening and heartbreaking to me. However, it also inspired me to bring awareness to this issue and tell my story as well as those other international students.

The advice I would offer first year writers is to write from the heart. Start by writing about things you care about and you will slowly realize that anyone can be a writer. Writing is simply telling a story. Also, begin working on your essays weeks before they are due as this gives you ample time to receive feedback from your peers, professors, and the writing center. Other important advice is to utilize the Writing Center resource. We all pay for those resources and some of the workers there can help you (even if it is as simple as wanting to hear someone read your paper or proofread it). Also, know that people have different writing styles so do not compare yourself to others. Believe that you can write and just write. The best thing you can always do as a writer is giving it a TRY.

Don't Put Me in a Box: Autoethnography about Being Primitive

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the United States of America, CVG Airport. Local time 8:00 pm Eastern time." While this airplane landing announcement may seem like an ordinary thing to most people, on August 20th, 2013, these simple words were a form of positive affirmation that my dreams had become a reality. You see, growing up, one of my goals and dreams was to depart from my home country, Nairobi, Kenya, and go to America in pursuit of a quality higher education. It is true that similar to America, Nairobi also has higher education, but since I was six years old, I viewed America as the best country in the world and gave it the highest standards. Considering I had never visited the country, my view was influenced by the people around me who spoke great things about the opportunities and success people get from just stepping foot in America. In order to make my dream a reality, I took it upon myself and applied to different American universities including Xavier University, which I chose to attend. It was at Xavier, however, that I realized being from a country in Africa was perceived as primitive.

"Are you from Africa?," "Do you speak African?," "How do you speak English so well?," "How did you arrive here ... did you come via boat?," "Do you wear clothes in Africa?" These are some of the questions I was asked during my first week of classes at Xavier University. It was hard for me to fathom how an American could confuse Africa to be a country rather than a continent and to view Africa as being uncivilized. However, at first, I didn't mind these questions because, after all, they are just questions. It wasn't until after logging into my computer in my dorm room when I saw an email that had bounced

back because it couldn't be delivered that I realized how some of my peers felt about me. My American roommate attempted to send an email to my freshman hall Resident Assistant pretending to be me saying, "Hi can I request to have an African roommate? I want someone who can speak easily to me." This email made me realize that just because I was from a country in Africa, people thought I was inferior to them.

In addition, I was asked more shocking questions during my first weeks of classes. "I'm sorry, can you say that again, I'm having trouble understanding your accent ... repeat it one more time, please ... I still can't understand." "Are you sure that is the correct answer?" "What curriculum did you use in your country?" These are among the responses I received from my fellow classmates whenever I contributed during group discussions. I was even more shocked when a student made a statement to me saying, "I'm sure you got accepted into this school so as to increase our diversity rate" and another one asked me, "Why are you so primitive? And what's up with that voodoo stuff? Is it real?" At this point, I was frustrated with the ignorant perception that some Americans had of Africa. The thought of me having put in so much work to learn about America and its culture, while some Americans didn't even bother to learn about my country, let alone Africa as a whole, made me sick to my stomach. In some part, my frustration increased because I held America and its people to very high standards. I thought they would be more welcoming, friendly, and culturally informed.

In contrast, they viewed me as unsophisticated, unimportant, undeveloped, crude, undeserving, uneducated, and unintelligent. The fact that I was put in a bubble simply because I was from a different continent annoyed me. Instead of focusing on my inner qualities and talents, or trying to figure out whether I was smart or not, or even trying to know my culture like I knew theirs, I was placed in one category based on the assumption that I was primitive. That feeling made me hate the word *primitive* and I was annoyed every single time someone even slightly mentioned that word. I knew that I was not what some Americans perceived of me and that I shouldn't let their perception define who I am. In this realization, I figured out that the problem was not with Africa. The problem was with the people who perceived the continent negatively because they didn't know better. They had never taken the time to research countries in Africa and the cultures of African people. The American perception of me as primitive was a result of their ignorance and lack of education about African culture.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word *primitive* as a derogatory term that means, "An uncivilized, unintelligent, or uncouth person" ("Primitive," *Oxford*). It also shows that the word is frequently used today. In contrast, the Urban Dictionary online website's top definition states that *primitive* is, "An informal insult which is not meant to be offensive and just to make a point that someone is thinking stupidly" ("Primitive," *Urban*). Even though these two sources have defined *primitive* differently, both definitions have negative connotations. Since I wanted to understand other people's views about being perceived as primitive, I conducted a survey, interviews, and an experiment at Xavier University.

From my surveys and interviews, I realized that this experience was not unique to only me. I interviewed Africans and Americans to get a feel of what they thought about being perceived as primitive. I surveyed 19 people: 12 thought that being perceived as primitive had a negative connotation, while 11 people admitted to having perceived a culture or a person as primitive. I then interviewed 14 people, seven Africans and seven Americans. All 14 people agreed that *primitive* has a negative connotation, especially when used to refer to a person and in the context of Africa. All 14 people also linked it to lack of civilization. Based on the responses from my surveys and interviews, I concluded that most people perceived *primitive* as lack of civilization, underdevelopment, hunting for food, and living with wild animals. Most people also perceived *primitive* as a barbaric kind of living in terms of lacking good mannerisms. They compared the lack of manners to how animals, especially monkeys, behave. In addition, most people did not associate *primitive* with technology or intelligence. Instead, they thought it could be linked to uneducated people and people who even lack the simplest form of technology. Altogether, most people perceived primitiveness as negative.

I also asked my interviewees if they had ever been called *primitive*. All seven Africans admitted that although people had not blatantly called them *primitive*, they feel as though Americans perceive them as such. This is due to the ridiculous questions they are asked and the treatments they receive after disclosing the fact that they come from an African country. The questions they are asked range from, "Do you have real houses?" to "Do you have a pet lion?" From these questions, it is evident that Americans who ask them regard Africans as savages in that, similar to wild animals, they do not have an enclosed habitat and we have close relations with wild animals. Comparing Africans to wild animals shows that they are inferior to human beings hence suggesting that Africans are not human beings. When explaining how she does not understand why some Americans perceive Africans as primitive, one of my interviewees said, "You see I'm speaking English to you, and you see that I'm well-mannered. You wouldn't even have guessed that I'm from Africa but because I've told you, you think I'm primitive!" Her frustration brought me to a further realization that I was not the only one who hates being perceived as primitive.

Similar to the Africans, all seven Americans I interviewed thought that, when used in an African context, the word *primitive* is insulting. My study showed that five out of seven Americans admitted to having referred some cultures and Africans as primitive. They also admitted to having asked Africans ignorant questions and agreed that if they were of African descent and asked the same questions, they would feel insulted. After finding out that most people viewed *primitive* as insulting, I did an experiment where I went around the campus and told random people that they looked primitive. I conducted the experiment on 12 random people. From this, I observed that all 12 people looked

shocked and confused, and 10 out of 12 people felt insulted. Furthermore, they became defensive and explained why they did not look primitive. The fact that Americans would feel insulted when perceived as primitive further emphasizes the fact that primitiveness has a negative connotation. Therefore, if Americans feel insulted, it does not make sense for them to perceive Africans as being primitive.

Perceiving Africans as primitive is a form of othering. In his article, "The Other and Othering—A Short Introduction," Yannis Gabriel defines othering as, "the process of casting a group, an individual or an object into the role of the 'other' and establishing one's own identity through opposition to and, frequently, vilification of this Other" (Gabriel). He further explains how the *othering* takes place saying, "The process of othering may be initiated by an encounter between civilizations that have no previous tradition of contact or understanding" (Gabriel). His statement explains why during colonization, the Europeans and North Americans viewed Africans as primitive. In his journal, "African Bodies: Othering the African in Precolonial Europe," Tom Meisenhelder writes a genealogical analysis of how the Europeans established pre-constructions of Africa as the "other." He says, "As many have previously noted, blackness and primitive savagery came together in the European mind alongside whiteness and civilization, to Europeans Africa marked a lower boundary of human history ... Edward Long, for instance, classified Africans as close to beasts due to their poor intellect, lack of moral sensibility, and unrestrained sexuality" (Meisenhelder, 106). His statement reveals that the Europeans were the first people to view Africans as being primitive. It also shows that the Europeans viewed Africans that way because Africans were different from them in terms of color, and livelihood. When talking again about how Europeans and North America viewed Africa, Meisenhelder says,

Africa, of course, was known as the 'dark continent,' a term that was used to refer to the color of the inhabitants, the immorality of their way of life, and the dangers of Africa as a place. In addition, African cultures commonly were classified as savage. This, it was argued, could be seen in the African's nakedness which indicated that African culture did not reasonably control and direct its members' actions, including their exaggerated sexuality. (Meisenhelder, 107)

From this statement, it is clear that Europeans viewed Africans as inferior, barbaric, and as people in need of uplifting. Because they saw things they perceived as flaws, they categorized Africans as "the other" and since they viewed themselves as superior, they decided to colonize Africans. The colonization was a form of unjust oppression and harsh treatment, hence showing that othering has severe consequences. Another consequence that occurred from categorizing Africa as the "other" is that the stereotype of primitive Africa has been perpetuated all over the world, including America.

After a few reflections, I realized that the media has also influenced Americans' perception of Africa. A perfect example is the comedic South African movie, *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. The movie tells the story of a Kalahari bushman Xi who together with his tribe, practice happy, simple living and only depend on nature for their daily necessities. When a Coca-Cola bottle drops from the sky, the bushman is surprised by the rare object and assumes that the gods have given it to them as a gift. However, once the Coca-Cola bottle stirs feelings of jealousy, anger, and greed among the tribe, Xi declares that the gods must be crazy to send them such an object that ruins their happiness. He then decides to walk to the end of the earth to return the bottle to the gods. The bushman and his tribe are naked throughout the whole movie and they interact well with wild animals. Also, they do not live in a house or use technology, they hunt the food they eat, and they speak in click sounds. This is just one example but there are multiple movies similar to this that represent Africans in this way, which explains why and how Americans associate Africans with primitiveness. In the same movie, there are people living civilized lives. However, some Americans fail to notice how the civilized Africans live but choose to only focus on the bushman's way of life.

In addition, most American media focus their advertisements on only poor Africans. Advertisements such as "donate 25 cents and save an African child" usually show images of sad, hungry children begging for food, sick children, and impoverished environments lacking water and technology. In contrast, the media often neglect to show the developed side of Africa and its civilized people. Although these images are effective when appealing for donations to charity organizations, they create a myth that the whole of Africa depends on charity. These myths about Africa have been developed in American minds for centuries. In his journal, "Stereotypes of Africa in the United States," Harmony S. O'Rourke states,

It begins at an early age. A popular book, which current American college students may have read in their toddler years, follows Bert and Ernie of Sesame Street as they traverse the wilds of Africa on safari. Dressed in khaki, they play peek-a-boo not only with the likes of zebras, leopards, and giraffes but with tigers, too. Cultural production even in its most innocent forms finds a way to generate false categories of knowledge about Africa, perpetuating and recycling myths mired in centuries-old stereotypes of the 'Dark Continent' and how Westerners have encountered it. (O'Rourke 460)

O'Rourke's statement suggests that the stereotype about Africa as primitive has been developed by Americans from their childhood through the books they read. Because they grow up believing these stereotypes, they are likely to pass these ideas on to their children, hence perpetuating the stereotype that Africans are primitive individuals.

By regarding Africans as primitive, some Americans imply that Africans did not contribute in forming civilization; after all, an uncivilized person is incapable of creating civilization. However, their implications are wrong due to the fact that it is Africans and African nations who established the first governments and civilizations. This is evident in the journal article, "Egypt Cradle of Civilization," published by *Society for Science and the Public*. It states, "Dr. Sandford's report shows that Egypt must have been one of the first homes of man. And the evidence indicates that it was most probably in Egypt that man first slowly developed into a creature of civilization" (88). This proves that Africa is the mother of all civilizations, hence implying that other nations of the world followed our lead. Also, Africa is credited for developing the first written form of language and mathematical algebra, as well as being skilled in agriculture as they improved irrigation techniques. Furthermore, the pyramids in Egypt are regarded as one of the greatest manmade structures on Earth, so much so that when they were attempted to be rebuilt, they started to crumble. The history of Egypt and its relationship to civilization proves that Africa has provided some of the most creative, intelligent, and sophisticated people in the world and that has Africa contributed a huge part of to civilization.

However, I admit Africa has problems as well. This is due to the fact that some Africans face severe poverty, hunger, suffering, and incurable diseases such as HIV and AIDS. It is disappointing that due to stereotypical situations, Africa is perceived by only these problems. Americans should remember that problems and sufferings are present in many nations around the world and not just African nations. Instead of focusing on the negatives, Americans should look at how Africans have progressed even after being oppressed by other powerful countries such as the British Empire. Most countries have regained their independence and now have a growing population and economy. They are also upcoming in technology and still manage to maintain their traditions and values. It is also true that there are some tribes who choose to live simple lives in the village instead of the busy city life. While some also relate well to animals of all kinds, they simply should not be confused with *primitive*. These people are important in African communities as they preserve important African cultures.

It is ironic that Americans will ridicule Africans ways of living but still use their culture to start trends and earn money. This is especially seen when American fashion designers appropriate African culture by using African cultural outfits to create new trends as a form of ethnic style. The perfect example of this is the Dashiki print. The pop culture website, Africaontheblog.com discusses how the Dashiki print has become popular in America saying, "Throughout New York, Atlanta and other major cities in the United States, the Dashiki has made a comeback! People are using the print for dresses, shirts, jackets etc. It seems like

everyone wants to rock a Dashiki" (Wilkins). Although it is good that America is finally embracing African culture, the problem comes about when they do not give credit to Africans. They are also disrespectful when they wear some outfits, which are only supposed to be worn during specific ceremonies. It would be more appealing if America studied the culture first before appropriating it.

In order to advance as a continent, myths and stereotypes of Africa have to be replaced by facts. Americans should take it upon themselves to study historical and modern Africa in order to be more informed. Some Africans living in America are also expressing their frustrations through social media by bringing down the stereotypes. BuzzFeed.com showcased a photo campaign called, "The Real Africa: Fight the Stereotype" done by students from Ithaca College who wanted to eliminate stereotypes about Africa. The students used slogans such as "Africa is not a country," "Africa is not filled with diseases," "Africans do not live in the desert," "Africa is not a jungle filled with wild animals," and "I don't speak Africa because Africa is not a language" (Chuck). This is only the first step to fixing the problem. Nevertheless, Americans still have a lot of research to do in order to discover the real Africa.

Looking back at my experiences during the first weeks of school, although some Americans viewed me as primitive, this view is not a true description of who I really am. The stigma of primitiveness can be eliminated if people take the time to intentionally learn and understand other people. Even though our ways of living might have significant differences, we also share some similarities. For instance, those who viewed me as primitive would be shocked to know that to some extent, my lifestyle is similar to theirs. I love watching Hollywood movies, and English is my favorite subject. I speak it well because it is taught as a subject in Kenya from kindergarten through higher education. In my hometown, Nairobi, Kenya, we have similar means of transportation including cars, buses, trains and airplanes. They would also be shocked to know that I am a hardworking, intelligent, talented female who believes in women's rights. Therefore, instead of putting me in a category, they should desire to know me based on my personality, beliefs, and talents.

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Questions to Consider

1. Sarah begins her ethnography with her own personal experience, telling first-hand of her experiences coming to America and finding that many of her peers thought of her as "inferior" or "primitive." How does it affect you as a reader to know that the writer of this essay is drawing upon personal experience? How does her background influence Sarah's ethos as a speaker/writer of this essay? Would you feel differently about this information if it were presented in a more "objective sounding" manner devoid of personal information? How does the auto-ethnographic nature of this essay work to persuade an audience that these attitudes exist and that action should be taken?
2. In addition to her own experience, Sarah brings in outside resources, such as research, surveys, experimentation, and interviews. Which sources did you find the most compelling? Do you react differently to text-based resources (such as the articles she cites) than you do to her reports of her interviews? If so, why might that be?
3. Sarah shows the reader what it has been like for her to come to America and Xavier as an international student from Nairobi. What was your reaction to Sarah's experiences of being treated as inferior or "primitive?" How might your own background—race, class, country of origin, etc.—influence your reaction to Sarah's story? Additionally, what do you think should or could be done to alter these stereotypes, either on campus or beyond?

Growing Together: The Importance of Moral Education at University

Isabel DeMarco

Narrative Argument

Reflection

Originally, I was assigned a paper in my Honors Rhetoric class to discuss the true purpose of education. What was most challenging for me initially was finding something to write about that was both believable and something that I was able to relate to my personal life. I am most drawn into essays and stories wherein the authors incorporate themselves into the pieces.

When writing a piece, I always start by composing an outline. From there, I decide which quotes I want, and once I have those, I start writing fluidly. My first full draft is always awful and chunky. I then read it and think about what did not flow and what sounded bad. With that in mind, I start over and completely rewrite the piece; in this instance, my second write-through was the piece that is now published. I work in the Writing Center, so instead of having it edited there, I brought it to a professor to work through with me.

For first year writers, I would definitely recommend meeting with their professors throughout the semester to review old work and to work on creating their voice. I think that once an author has a developed voice and style, that essays come more easily.

Growing Together: The Importance of Moral Education at University

My first semester at Xavier University has redefined my view of the purpose of a college education. I have witnessed blatant and unapologetic racism first-hand here on campus, and have been changed by it permanently. Photos recently surfaced of a current freshman at Xavier wearing a black facemask with the caption, "Who needs white when black lives matter?" At the same time, it was made public that students in Fenwick had decorated their dorm with a skeleton wearing traditional African clothing while in a position historically associated with lynching. These incidents, especially the first one, hit close to home. The girl involved in the blackface scandal lived across the hall from me and is my best friend's roommate. My best friend, who is African American, was shocked by the photo and her roommate's actions, as was I. We attended the silent protest and the forum held by the university to discuss the event. While there, I heard many people rightfully condemning the racist actions of my classmate; however, I listened to countless people excuse her behavior by saying, "She has the right to freedom of speech, especially on a college campus!" These shocking occurrences forced me to evaluate how my beloved university responded to racial issues and forced *me* to form an opinion as to what I believe the purpose of a college education is. In light of this tragedy, I have come to believe that it

is the duty of a university to provide its students with a moral education that focuses on equality and values while acting as an example as to how students should conduct themselves.

After conforming to the beliefs of one's parents for 18 years, it is not surprising that many people view college as the key time for students to choose their own beliefs and define their own values; university is often the first time students are away from the influence of their hometowns and their families. This can be a great opportunity for people to express themselves and develop their identity. Many students feel safe to explore different religions and their sexuality when they arrive at university in ways which they were previously unable. Historically, universities used to have a larger impact on shaping the values of their students; however, this shifted with the introduction of the women's rights movement and the civil rights movement to college campuses (Arum and Roska 1). Related to this,

In the 20th century, colleges and universities started to move away from educating for character and began to focus on scientific facts and research. The philosophy of logical positivism, arriving in American universities from Europe, asserted a radical distinction between facts (which could be scientifically proven) and values (which positivism held were mere expressions of feeling, not objective truth). In this perspective, moral reasoning was seen as 'value judgment' and something that was outside the purview of academic institutions. Faculty abandoned character education in favor of scholarly research, and student affairs professionals emerged to bridge this gap for students. (MacElroy 3)

Universities became less concerned with shaping their students and educating them morally than they were with conducting research. This change allowed students to practice their own beliefs and have their own morals while expressing them in public ways. Because of this shift, college has become known as a time for students to experiment and ask themselves what they believe in and what they want to accomplish in their lifetimes. However, some students' beliefs can be incredibly disrespectful and can be the cause of harm to others. This idea of "causing harm" is highlighted by the recent events at our university. Many students, especially minority students, feel unsafe on campus because of the lack of "visual action" that the school has taken in response to the black-face scandal. It is for these reasons that I believe that colleges should make an increased effort to provide students with morals and values rather than letting them loose to discover their own.

Attending Xavier and witnessing these recent events has helped me realize that a university education should direct some focus on morals and values and that universities should act as examples as to how students should conduct themselves. Universities have become institutions where sexual assaults and racist acts come to light, only to be swept under the rug by an administration that cares more about rankings, sports, and profits than about its students well-being and happiness. It is the duty of colleges to make sure that students receive a strong moral education and understand the wrongness of racism and sexual assault:

With many campuses seeing an increase in bias related incidents, alcohol and drug use, and unprotected sexual activity, it is important to return back to strong character education that helps students make the connection between their thoughts and actions. Hedonism on campus is the chaos and disorder of students struggling to internalize moral principles and to develop sound character. In a situation such as this, student affairs professionals can step in and be a significant presence of principled people with shared standards that have the power to reshape a person's character. (MacElroy 4)

Colleges do not have to impose values on students; rather, they should provide guidelines that encourage students to further develop their morals and make good decisions. Colleges have the power to greatly influence the morals of students on campus just in how the administration reacts to certain events. By refusing to disclose how the students involved in these scandals were reprimanded, Xavier University sends the message to its African American students that blackface is okay, while saying to its white population that they will not face repercussions for their actions. In *Our Underachieving Colleges*, Derek Bok quoted David Brooks, saying, "Highly educated young people are tutored, taught, and monitored in all aspects of their lives, except in the most important, which is character building. When it comes to this, most universities leave them alone. And they find themselves in a world of unprecedented ambiguity" (Bok 146). When society tells people that blackface is deeply wrong but a university is seen to refrain from punishing students that perpetrate these racist acts, the school sends mixed messages, perpetuates this aforementioned ambiguity, and fails to create a sense of morality and values on campus. Universities need to take advantage of their power and use it to act as role models for students to shape the morals and values of the student body. Allowing inappropriate behavior to occur on campus is incredibly wrong, and by failing to act, what kind of message is a university sending its students? What kind of example is the school setting? By holding open forums in Gallagher like the one that occurred today and by allowing students to have peaceful protests, students are able to voice their opinions in safe ways while being guided by the university. Following this idea, President of Columbia University, George Rupp, eloquently said that, "What universities can do and have to do is locate moral and religious issues in their historical contexts. There's got to be a sense of a living, changing cultural tradition that students engage and criticize, and, in criticizing, make their own" (Niebuhr). If Xavier takes an appropriate response to issues like this in the future, students will not feel required to retaliate and react with violence and viciousness.

Ultimately, in light of this tragedy, I have come to believe that it is the duty of a university to provide its students with a moral education that focuses on equality and values while acting as an example as to how students should conduct themselves. Universities have the power to change the cultural climate on campus and shape the morals of their students. My university cannot reverse their inaction regarding the blackface scandal and cannot undo the fact that the offender still walks freely around campus. However, this does not mean that my university cannot still grow from this experience. Looking forward from this

tragedy, Xavier can take actions that can foster togetherness and a renewed sense of community among the student body. If the administration focuses on promoting equality and morality through classes like GOA and the first year seminar while holding events that promote the values of the school, students will be able to develop into moral and good people. When the Black Student Association or the LGBTQIAA Association and the university hold events in conjunction, the school sets a standard for student behavior and displays an expectation that all students treat each other with respect, regardless of race, sexuality, or gender. Everyone goes to university to study something different and experience something different, but it is of utmost importance that everyone receive a moral education at university as a means of effectively combating the racism, sexism, and homophobia that is often prevalent on college campuses and across the United States.

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Questions to Consider

1. Isabel situates her argument about the importance of a moral education within a personal narrative and experience. How does her explanation at the beginning of the essay affect the reader, especially those who are from the same campus? How does Isabel move from her personal story to a thesis-driven argument? How does she integrate or come back to her own experience throughout the essay? What effect does this have upon the reader?
2. In her essay, Isabel uses longer quotes in a couple of places. Why might she have chosen to use these particular quotes in her paper? How does it influence your reading of the argument when you encounter long quotes? What are some other ways that Isabel integrates outside information into her argument? How does this work alongside or with her narrative?
3. All controversies have multiple sides, and while Isabel argues that universities have a duty to address morals that support equality, what other arguments can you imagine that are counter to this? How could those counterarguments be addressed in this paper? For an audience that totally disagrees with Isabel's position, what information might convince them? How might the sources, tone, claims, or evidence change for multiple audiences with different points of view?

Category: Common Assignment

The Common Assignment is an essay that is required in all ENGL 101 courses at Xavier. Although the topic for this assignment changes periodically, the general parameters are the same. Students in all sections of ENGL 101 read a common set of readings on the topic that offer different viewpoints, and then form their own arguments or positions based upon these readings, as well as additional outside research. The Common Assignment is typically composed (or at least revisited and revised) near the end of the semester so that students in ENGL 101 have the chance to build their writing, research, and argument skills by the time they craft and complete their Common Assignment essay.

This essay has multiple purposes. First, it gives all students in ENGL 101 a standard set of readings and an assignment that is required across all sections, which provides continuity in both knowledge and skills in order to complete. Second, it allows the Writing Program a shared assignment to assess the writing skills of students in ENGL 101 to make sure that we are meeting our promise to students and the university to successfully teach a set of learning outcomes for this course. Third, it allows students to test their own abilities in research, writing, and argumentation after practicing these skills all semester. By completing the Common Assignment, you participate in an experience shared by all ENGL 101 students and help the Writing Program improve the instruction it provides to you and to future students at Xavier.

In Henry Emch's essay, "Subverting the Dominant Paradigm: Why Not to Vote," he uses the assigned sources, along with other supplemental research, to support the claim that not voting, when chosen consciously, is a legitimate form of political discourse. In a culture divided by strong political opinions, Henry argues that there is a place for neutrality. Drawing upon historical and philosophical precedent, his position offers a third-space within bipartisan tensions.

Subverting the Dominant Paradigm: Why Not to Vote

Henry Emch

Common Assignment

Reflection

My essay was inspired by an experience I had last November in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election. At that time, I was part of an intentional community, and was living in a large house with about 10 other people. The day after the election, my predominantly left-leaning housemates were all flipping out about the results. I, however, had adopted a more neutral political stance. I found it both frustrating and off-putting to have to listen to my peers' demonstrative opinions without being able to respond honestly in turn (lest I run the risk of being attacked for holding a minority viewpoint). My intention with this paper was to try and remove some of the stigma surrounding political neutrality, specifically in regard to non-voting.

To young writers, my best advice is to think critically. Try to develop your own ideas apart from whatever happens to be most popular. Don't listen too much to your detractors. Usually, the truth is not going to be fit for public consumption. As Noam Chomsky said, "Either you repeat the same conventional doctrines everybody is saying, or else you say something true, and it will sound like it's from Neptune."

Subverting the Dominant Paradigm: Why Not to Vote

In the United States, it is assumed that political engagement requires a certain degree of awareness and participation. Touted as individual freedoms, activities such as voting, contacting representatives, and protesting are strongly encouraged. Political scientist Russell J. Dalton references an early account of American citizenship given by Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1830s: "To take a hand in the regulation of society and to discuss it is [the] biggest concern and, so to speak, the only pleasure an American knows" (qtd. in Dalton 53). Political involvement is defined almost exclusively as taking some kind of positive action—striving to achieve community-oriented goals, for example, or espousing an ideological viewpoint. In light of this, non-action is seen by the dominant culture as fruitless and self-indulgent. According to Abby Johnston, data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau shows that "people between the ages of 18 and 24 have voted in presidential elections at consistently lower percentages than any other age group" (Johnston 3). Young people in America, who make up one of the largest non-voting populations in the country, often come under heavy fire for their perceived lack of interest. However, the argument that non-voters are lazy or apathetic ignores the idea that disengagement might have some intrinsic value.

There are many alternatives to the overly action-obsessed mindset of mainstream politics. Non-voting, when done consciously and with specific intent, is a legitimate form of political discourse.

It might seem difficult to imagine non-voting as anything other than irresponsible, especially considering the divisiveness of the current political climate. But disengagement, far from being a merely passive device, can be used effectively when responding to crisis. There is a long historical precedent for opting out during times of great political upheaval. The Chinese poet-philosopher Lao-Tzu produced his most famous work, the *Tao Te Ching*, a collection of mystical aphorisms, during a tumultuous episode known as the Warring States period. Lao-Tzu, in response to the overwhelming violence generated by contending political factions, adopted a lofty, dispassionate outlook. The ethereal opening lines of the *Tao Te Ching* stress the impermanent, ever-changing nature of reality:

The tao that can be told
is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named
is not the eternal Name. (Lao-Tzu 1–4)

Lao-Tzu understood that political strife may not be the most accurate representation of reality, nor is it the only lens through which to see the world. From a cynical point of view, politics might only be a petty game played by those struggling to maintain control. The ideal government, according to Lao-Tzu, is humble and self-effacing to the point of being barely noticeable. Lao-Tzu's position, which questions and undermines the machinations of the powers that be, is still relevant today.

Whether adopting a dispassionate attitude or not, choice—the choice of what to do or what not to do when confronted with an issue—is at the center of political engagement. The act of voting has become synonymous with freedom of choice. But is choice really at the heart of voting? Voting, just as much as non-voting, should involve conscious reflection on the part of the individual. But many voters have only a limited understanding of the political processes in which they are engaged. The problem is not resolved when marketers try to rebrand voting as “hip” or “cool,” with the Rock the Vote campaign of the 90s, which attempted to lure Gen Xers to the polls being one notable example (Johnston 2). Government agencies, when they attempt to become more “hip” and “user-friendly,” are actually doing a disservice to voters by assuming that they are unintelligent. Presidential elections, driven by simplistic propaganda disseminated through ad campaigns, do nothing to elevate the level of political discussion amongst voters. True civic responsibility can only come through critical thinking, and critical thinking cannot be marketed to a mass audience. The average voter, unconsciously influenced by the slick promises of political spokespersons, may not be as free as they would like to think.

When the dominant culture is so oppressive that it fails to recognize the needs of individuals, withdrawal is sometimes the only honest form of protest that remains. Dalton touches on protest as a form of political participation. Protesting, he says, “not only expands the repertoire of political participation, but ... is a style of action that differs markedly from electoral politics” (Dalton 64). While Dalton is specifically referring to organized movements aimed at affecting policy change, non-voting and disengagement could also be construed as forms of protest. The United States, formerly a collection of British colonies, is a country founded on the right to secede. One such American who exemplified this spirit was the nineteenth-century philosopher and author Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau famously retreated from society to live a solitary existence in a cabin he had built for himself near Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. In his book, *Walden and Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau frames his reason for leaving society as a quest for truth:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. (Thoreau 85)

Regardless of whether or not it is accepted by the public, non-voting has meaning insofar as it remains a form of protest, a deliberate rejection of values that no longer have meaning on an individual level.

Politics reveals a partial truth about the world, but it can never represent the whole truth. Political narratives are relevant to some, and might even be compelling for the vast majority of people today, but just because a majority of people holds something to be true does not make it so. Non-voting and disengagement are necessary for the development of critical thinking. Political candidates, in their attempt to appeal to the lowest common denominator, wind up treating their constituents like children. Civic responsibility requires the effort of making conscious decisions in an attempt to separate truth from fiction. When the noise of a false reality drowns out your ability to think and make rational choices, then it may not only be wise, but essential, to leave that world behind.

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Questions to Consider

1. Henry mentions in his Reflection that his position for this paper arose from the social setting he was in during the 2016 election cycle. Does knowing this give you more insight into the position Henry holds in this paper? In what ways might your own environment and social interactions influence your opinion on this issue? What are the benefits and challenges to holding an opinion different from those around you? Or taking on a “third” position that is different from seemingly everyone’s?
2. In his essay, Henry uses historical and philosophical sources to support his position. How does this contrast to the other sources he uses? What types of sources do you find more compelling? Does that change with the context, tone, or audience for an argument? When is it effective to include historical or philosophical works in a paper?
3. Reading this essay, are you convinced of Henry’s claim that “Non-voting, when done consciously and with specific intent, is a legitimate form of political discourse?” What other types of support, reasons, or evidence might make this position even more compelling? If you were to offer a counterargument to his position, what arguments would you present? How might Henry refute them?

Category: Reflective Essay

Reflective writing requires students to take a step back from their own writing, thinking, and typical ways of interacting with the world in order to reflect upon how they do what they do everyday. By reflecting upon the writing process, students are required to articulate the choices they make, the experiences they have had, and how they have arrived where they are by the end of the semester or academic year. Contemplating in this way can encourage meta-cognitive awareness, which can allow you to more deeply understand the way you think, learn, and write.

You may be assigned various types of reflective writing in your ENGL 101 and 115 courses, as this type of writing can be adapted to suit many different purposes. Your instructor may ask you to write a reflective letter when you turn in your assignments so that your writing process is more transparent. Or, you may be asked to write a reflective essay at the end of the semester, looking back on the writing you have done and what you have learned. Reflective writing can take the form of more formal essays with writing prompts and page requirements, or it may be assigned as informal blog entries or discussion board posts as homework. Because reflective writing has the potential to help increase awareness of your writing and thinking process, you may want to keep a journal yourself that engages this type of writing, even if it is not required for your class. Meta-cognitive awareness of how and why you write the way that you do can support you in gaining skills, highlight your challenges, and increase the likelihood that you will be able to transfer a skill from one setting (such as ENGL 101 or 115) to another context.

Caitlin Meier reflects upon her experiences in the first year of college in her essay, “But Remember, This Is College, and This Is a Whole New World ...” Her essay was written in an ENGL 101 course as a final exam of sorts, where students were asked to use the final exam period to reflect upon their experiences as writers in their first year writing course. Timed writing is a skill that is helpful to learn, and engaging in a reflective written assignment like this for a final exam calls upon the skills students have learned throughout the semester. While there is not time to do significant revision or peer review, reflective essays can be a valuable way to re-think the learning from the semester, organize thoughts quickly and effectively, engage in pre-writing, and create a finished essay. Caitlin does this in her essay, which is specifically addressed to incoming students, and offers advice for succeeding in the first year of college.

There are many kinds of reflective writing, and in fact, you have been reading reflections from students throughout this book at the beginning of each student essay selection. As you read this piece, think about what you might learn from those who have come before and how you can integrate that wisdom into your own process. Through sharing knowledge, we can all help one another on the “write path” as you begin your college career.

But Remember, This Is College, and This Is a Whole New World ...

Caitlin Meier

Reflective Essay

Reflection

In reflecting on the English Composition course, my classmates and I were instructed to evaluate our performance, growth, and improvement over the course of the semester, and then compose an essay aimed at incoming first year students who would be taking English Composition during the 2017–2018 school year. We would have the entirety of an exam period to draft, compose, and revise our work, which would then be turned in at the end of the hour.

In my brief pre-writing stage, I jotted down my memorable Xavier experiences outside of the classroom: meeting new friends, attending retreats, March Madness, etc. Next, I formed a list of important academic lessons learned during my two years at Xavier, including how to use the electronic library, practicing appropriate study habits, utilizing time management skills, and attending professors' office hours.

From there, I began composing the draft, imagining as if I were writing a letter to a freshman student, sharing with them advice which could influence their first year at Xavier in a positive way. At this point, I found it a bit challenging to write professionally, yet personally and casually. However, I quickly was able to finish the essay, concluding in what seemed most appropriate—Go X!

It is my hope that this essay might encourage and assist first year students in not only their English Composition course, but also their entire first year experience as a whole.

But Remember, This Is College, and This Is a Whole New World ...

As you pack up the belongings in your childhood room, and say goodbye to your lifelong friends and adoring family, your mind is racing—trying to imagine where your next big adventure might take you. *What will my roommate be like? Do freshman closets have enough space for all of these shoes? Does the caf have anything good to eat? Will I actually make friends?* As the overwhelming process of transitioning from a carefree high school graduate to an incoming freshman in college transpires, and the exciting whirlwind of Manresa is concluded, the first day of classes your freshman year will await you with one single concern—*What is college all about?*

Wrapping up my sophomore year at Xavier, I can fully attest to the fact that college is going to be the best time of your life (thus far). Get involved, find your niche, and make this big place seem a little less big. Always be open to meeting new people—you never know who could be your best friend around here. Stand in the student section and cheer on our team, and when you cheer, be sure to cheer loud. Fall in love with every new, exciting opportunity you're faced with, and make Xavier your home. But at the end of the day, keep in mind the sole reason you are here—to succeed academically.

Succeed academically. What does this mean? In high school, you may have been the type of student who could study 30 minutes before your test, whip out an A+ paper the morning of its due date, attend class regularly, and bring home a report card your parents were proud to magnet to the refrigerator. **But remember, this is college, and this is a whole new world.** College courses will challenge you in unexpected ways, and require nothing less than the upmost dedication in, and out, of class. According to the University of Michigan-Flint, “for every one credit hour in which you enroll, you will spend approximately two to three hours outside of class studying” (“Surviving College”). In addition to acquiring strong study habits and putting them to use, to succeed academically in college, you must learn how to write.

Write? You're probably thinking that you've known how to write for the majority of your academic career. (Trust me, I thought the same.) **But once again, remember, this is college, and this is a whole new world.** Writing at the college level is an art that takes hours upon hours of practice: planning, rough drafts, peer reviews, rewording, rephrasing, rewriting ... again, and again, and again. So when the first day of the semester is a go, and you find your seat in English Composition, prepare yourself to let go of the high school writer you once were, and embark on the journey of becoming the blossoming college writer you were born to be.

To the Incoming Freshman at Xavier: Three Tips to Successful College Writing

1. Wikipedia is not a source.

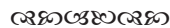
One of the most helpful aspects of Xavier University is that it is overflowing with resources. When your first college paper is assigned, this is golden information to have on hand. Xavier's electronic library is easily accessible, and provides students with a plethora of sources at the touch of a screen. Accessed through the “Current Students” page on Xavier's website, students then click the “Library” link and are able to search among hundreds of thousands of academic books, articles, journals, and sites in order to fulfill their academic needs. So when your professor reminds you that “Google is unacceptable” and “Wikipedia is not a source,” you'll know exactly where to go to find the information you need to write that A+ college essay.

2. Write to your professor.

Imagine you're a young child once again, and you're writing a letter to Santa Claus. Remember him? The jolly old man who slid down your chimney and left presents under your Christmas tree to await you on those magical Christmas mornings? You wouldn't write him a letter sharing the "bad things" you had done all year, right? You'd butter him up with all of the good things—"I was really good all year, Santa. I even shared my toys with my little brother." The same goes for college writing. Sometimes, to earn the grade you desire, you have to write what your professor wants to hear. Your philosophy professor most likely does not want to read a paper seasoned with details regarding why Plato's *Republic* is morally irrelevant and unjust, and though you might think otherwise, it's in your (and your grade's) best interest to attempt to understand the Socratic dialogue, and produce an essay that will be appealing to the professor of the course.

3. It's all about improvement.

You've written your first college essay, and submitted it last week. Today is the day! You're heading back to class and patiently awaiting your professor handing back the excellent grade you earned. He sets your paper on the desk in front of you and you flip it over ... C+. *What?!?* You might be feeling as if those late nights typing, revising, restarting over and over and over were all for nothing, but this is far from the case. Sometimes, the grade we earn on the first (and sometimes second and third) paper is not what we have desired. Our prior education has trained us to write in a certain fashion, and adhering to it, we expect the same outcomes as attained before. **But again I remind you, this is college, and this is a whole new world.** Do not let this C+ define you as a "bad college writer." Instead, allow it to propel you forward, providing the opportunity to learn from your mistakes and continue in the process of successfully writing in college.



Xavier University is a remarkable adventure unlike any other. As a freshman student at Xavier, you will learn more about yourself than you ever thought possible. You'll learn what kind of person you want to become, the kind of people you want to surround yourself with, where you're able to study the hardest (and it's probably not in the dorms at Brockman), what tastes the best in the caf (go check out Steve's sandwich line), and what it takes to become the best student you can be. **And yes, this is college, and this is a whole new world,** but Xavier University will fully equip you to take this college ride by the horns, and will mold you into a strong, successful, steadfast student and individual who is capable of changing the world. Go X!

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Questions to Consider

1. For this assignment, Caitlin had to pre-write, draft, organize, and revise the entire essay in one sitting. In her reflection on the assignment, she discusses the process by which she approached this task during the final exam period. How do you prepare to write in a timed-writing situation? What are some other strategies that you might employ when you are called upon to write an entire essay in one sitting? Looking through her essay, can you see evidence of her pre-writing process? How do you think her approach helped her write this essay in the amount of time she was given?
2. In her essay, Caitlin had a clear audience in mind and wrote her essay specifically addressing that audience. As a member of that audience, do you feel “included” in her advice, as though she is speaking to you? What strategies did she employ in order to bring the reader into her essay? How might her focus on audience have influenced the way she drafted her essay? Can you find specific places in her essay where it is clear that she has her audience in mind? Also, she repeats the idea that college is “a whole new world” throughout her paper. What effect does this have? How does this repetition add to the cohesiveness, message, or tone of her paper?
3. What if Caitlin had been asked to write a reflection addressed a different audience—for instance, a committee for graduate school admission, a hiring manager for an internship she wanted, or her second grade brother. How might her choices in tone, purpose, style, language, etc., have changed in those circumstances? In what ways will the audience addressed alter the way a writer chooses to write? Do you think that this essay is more effective in the second person, informal tone that Caitlin chose? Or would it be more effective as an “objective sounding” formal essay? Why?